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COM Outlook Spring 2008

College of Osteopathic Medicine

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NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

COM Outlook

College of Osteopathic Medicine

Spring 2008

Volume 9, Number 2



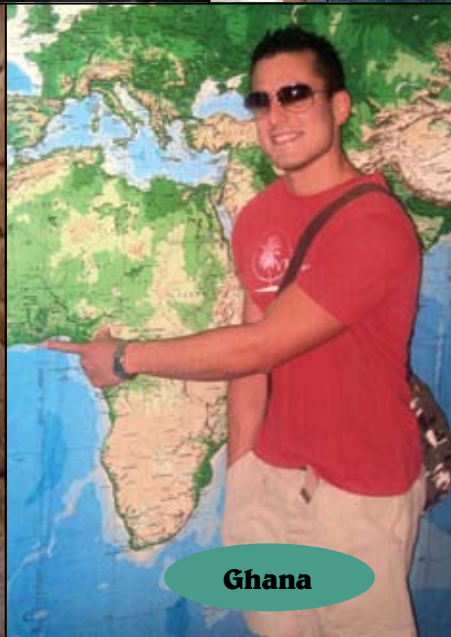
Portugal



Guatemala



Saudi Arabia



Ghana



Jamaica

INTERNATIONAL ESCAPADES!

Students, Faculty Crisscross the Globe



Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D.

I am proud to announce that NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine continues to be a center for innovation and the advancement of the osteopathic profession to continuously enhance patient care. For example, we recently partnered with the Florida Department of Corrections to launch the first-ever correctional medicine fellowship in the world. This program will accept two physicians

annually into the two-year fellowship, which includes a master of public health degree. For admission into the fellowship, physicians must have successfully completed a residency program.

Due to the growing population in prisons and the uniqueness of the population itself in regard to the higher incidences of specific diseases such as alcoholism, heart problems, HIV/AIDS, infectious ailments, and certain negative behavior patterns, the need is clearly evident to help prepare physicians to better perform, direct, and serve these populations.

The establishment of this innovative correctional medicine fellowship resulted from the success of our predoctoral rural and medically underserved rotations, which include a state prison system elective that is so popular with many of our students that it actually became the number one elective rotation offered. This experience showed us there was both a need and desire for advanced training for physicians who choose correctional medicine as a career path and truly wish to medically improve the quality of these patients' lives.

The fellowship will provide the selected physicians with the necessary knowledge to deal with the patient population and help them better understand the prison system, the expectations, and the legal limitations that occur within the system's confines. Much of the credit for this innovative fellowship, which initially will be accredited through an independent certifying board until such time as the AOA and ACGME recognize it as a specialty, belongs to Dr. David Thomas, who serves as chair of the college's Department of Surgery and the Division of Correctional Medicine. The creation of this correctional medicine fellowship is the culmination of several years of dedicated effort by Dr. Thomas, who conceived the idea and is responsible for developing the fellowship curriculum along with Dr. James Howell, chair of the Department of Rural Medicine, who is also responsible for the correctional medicine rotations.

Another exciting area of innovation involves exploring the opportunity for establishing AOA-accredited osteopathic medical education in Europe. We are currently investigating the

possibility of participating with Universidade Fernando Pessoa in Portugal to establish an AOA-accredited osteopathic program for Europeans that will allow them to be licensed as osteopathic physicians with full practice rights.

This potential partnership with Portugal was an unexpected dividend that presented itself following our participation last August in an international distance education consortium held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As a result, Dr. Anthony J. DeNapoli, who serves as dean of international affairs at NSU's Fischler School of Education and Human Services, and I were invited by Universidade Fernando Pessoa to meet with the university's administration in Porto, Portugal, this past February to discuss the possibility of establishing an osteopathic medical program along with other health professional and education programs. The meeting went so well that the university's director, Dr. Salvato Trigo, will be visiting the NSU campus this coming May to further discuss the development and implementation of these programs.

In the previous issue of *COM Outlook*, we ran an article regarding the development of clinical rotations in collaboration with a rural medical school located at the Instituto Universitario de Ciencias de la Salud in La Rioja, Argentina. In the ensuing months, we have secured housing for our students and will begin these rotations in the very near future. These rotations will provide much-needed care to the medically underserved population in that area while also providing the opportunity for international experience with AOA-accredited osteopathic medicine. Within this program, students from the Instituto Universitario de Ciencias de la Salud will be doing clinical rotations in the United States. This new partnership will also allow us to provide enhanced educational experiences for our master of public health students, who will be able to do their practicums in a region where there are significant public health issues and needs.

Recently, yet another exciting innovation occurred at the college in regard to our utilization of the mock operating room unit housed on the HPD campus that allows us to train and acquaint our students with the procedures and protocols utilized in hospitals and ambulatory surgical units. This mock unit provides NSU-COM students with an orientation to the general design of a surgical unit as well as the proper procedures needed to prepare themselves before entering a surgical operating field. This experience will be incorporated into our new procedures course, along with many other innovative opportunities, to help prepare our students for the clinical environment in the most comprehensive manner possible.

These are just some examples of the exciting enhancements that occur routinely here at NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine as we prepare our students to face the medical challenges of tomorrow and contend with the shrinking borders of the new world in which we all live. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our faculty, staff, and students who work so hard to make these ideas a reality, which results in a more universal and comprehensive education—and an improved quality of life for present and future patients.



Fred Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.

Friday, April 25, 2008, will be a proud day for the Health Professions Division and will mark an important milestone in our continuing evolution as a collaborative multidisciplinary and clinical research venue. On this day, our inaugural HPD Research Day, which will feature both faculty and student participation from a range of programs, will take place at the Signature Grand in Davie, Florida.

Thanks to the proactive nature of Dr. Patrick Hardigan, who chairs the HPD Research Committee, the committee agreed it would be an excellent opportunity to create a showcase for student and faculty involvement in what NSU traditionally calls scholarly activity, much of which is actually research. Interestingly, many people view research as working in a laboratory and using test tubes and specialty equipment when the fact is research extends far beyond that restrictive definition. For example, we do some of the finest statistical and clinical research that can be found in the state of Florida. However, it's not done in a laboratory; it's done using research methodology and statistical knowledge and analysis.

Before I continue, I would like to thank and acknowledge the HPD Research Day Committee members who have been working so diligently to ensure the project's success. They are: Jodie Berman, Dr. Guy Nehrenz, Dr. Clark Galin, Dr. Sergio Kuttler, Dr. Franklin Garcia-Godoy, Dr. Harold Laubach, Dr. Scott Gorman, Dr. Joseph Pizzimenti, David Gensure, Dr. Leonard Levy, Dr. Gabriel Suci, Mislady Velez, and Dr. John Baldwin.

The creation of Research Day will allow our talented students to be present at one place at the same time so they can participate in and view various poster presentations as well as attend multiple discussion groups. This project has proven to be a truly time-consuming undertaking, so I commend the wonderful commitment of our deans and various program leaders who have allowed us to move forward with this multidisciplinary interchange in the area of research and scholarly activity.

Although it's impossible to predict the outcomes that will be realized in the weeks and months following Research Day, I have no doubt our students will be vastly enriched by the experience. I believe they will come away with a realization of the importance of research in the formative accumulation of knowledge one goes through regardless of what HPD program they're participating in here at NSU. It will also help them understand that presentational

research is not only the presentation of information relative to the synthesis of new drugs, but that it also applies to the application of new drugs, that it involves dealing with public health systems, and encompasses understanding the economics of the health care system.

The establishment of HPD Research Day illustrates the amazing transformation that has occurred as we have matured as an educational venue. Certainly, tremendous honor and recognition should be bestowed upon Dr. Morton Terry and, particularly, Dr. Arnold Melnick in their formulation of the health profession as a university—molding us from the clay, so to speak. When Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine and then Southeastern University of the Health Sciences were created, Drs. Terry and Melnick felt—and rightfully so at the time—that they could only focus on one task, which was providing education to the students. In their minds, research was a component that belonged to the more established and traditional universities.

However, as we expanded, research endeavors became a bigger part of our overall mission, especially as we moved forward in creating new programs and the curriculum and programmatic structures changed. A great deal of credit also needs to be given to Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni and his administrative and educational support team for modifying the NSU-COM curriculum and incorporating a great deal of scholarly activity opportunities for the students as well as the faculty.

I'm proud to say we've come a long way in a relatively short period of time. We now have multiple numbers of well-known and respected academic researchers in our institution that encompass the health professions spectrum. When Southeastern University of the Health Sciences merged with Nova University in 1994, we only had about \$400,000 in externally funded research. Today, the Health Professions Division is near the \$20 million mark, while the university is approaching \$50 million. The exciting reality is that we're headed toward a decade of unprecedented growth at the university. In fact, I anticipate that within five to eight years, the university will probably secure over \$100 million worth of externally funded research, while the HPD will be at somewhere in the neighborhood of \$40 to \$50 million.

Now that we've demonstrated our capabilities and showcased our acumen and research prowess, it's become apparent that we're viewed from a more-esteemed perspective than ever before. Thanks to events such as Research Day, the sky's the limit for the Health Professions Division of Nova Southeastern University.

Fred Lippman Ed.D.



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17 Angel Rivera Recounts Remarkable Experiences in Ghana

Earlier this year, fourth-year student Angel Rivera returned to an indigent area of Ghana to do a rural selective rotation at the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu. What transpired during his one-month educational excursion left him exhilarated, exhausted—and humbled.

18 Guatemala Medical Outreach Trip Gains Government Recognition

Between January 17-28, DOCARE International, Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine, and Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Colorado teamed up to provide greatly needed health care to families in Panahachel and other mountain communities around Lake Atitlan in Guatemala.

20 Dr. Cecilia Rokusek Shares Intriguing International Experiences

Dr. Cecilia Rokusek had the opportunity to witness the suppressive nature of two regimes firsthand when she visited North Korea and Saudi Arabia as part of a Universal Travel System group that designs trips for people who are among the most traveled in the world.

26 Office of Alumni Affairs Cultivates Close Ties with Graduates

It certainly wouldn't be an understatement to say that NSU-COM's Office of Alumni Affairs has come a long way since its inception in 1994, which is a fact evidenced by skyrocketing donations to the Alumni Association Fund, record attendance at various alumni events, and enhanced alumni interaction with the college and its students.

32 Dr. Tyler Cymet Reflects on His 20th Anniversary of Graduation

Dr. Tyler Cymet, a class of 1988 alumnus, shares his thoughts about commemorating his 20th anniversary as a Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (SECOM) graduate.

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Campus Safety and Security: A Call to Action for Higher Education

We hold the key to campus safety and violence prevention.

SEMINAR: APRIL 25, 2008 - 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tabletop and Scenario Responses

APRIL 26, 2008 - 7:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



LET'S ACT ON

- Forum for Challenges
- Current Best Practices
- Comprehensive Planning
- Ongoing Evaluation and Training



LOCATION

Nova Southeastern University
Health Professions Division
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Fort Lauderdale, FL 33328

For registration, please contact:

(954) 262-1688

or go to

<http://www.nova.edu/allhazards>





On January 7, Peter Ajluni, D.O., FAOAO, FACOS, current president of the American Osteopathic Association, visited NSU-COM to meet with the students and address the faculty about topical

issues relating to osteopathic medicine. During a faculty luncheon meeting, Dr. Ajluni took questions and discussed pertinent topics ranging from developing the quality and quantity of graduate medical education to the dilemma of decreasing physician reimbursement. Pictured (from left) are Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFFP, associate dean of alumni affairs, Dr. Ajluni, and Lawrence Jacobson, D.O., vice dean.



Pictured are Jessica Fischetti, Joseph Allgeier, D.O., director of medical education, Florida Hospital-East Orlando, and Laura De Leon.

OMS-III students Jessica Fischetti and Laura De Leon each received a \$5,000 cash award as recipients of the Florida Hospital-East Orlando Osteopathic Foundation Academic Scholarship Family Medicine Residency Program for

demonstrating excellence in leadership and academics. The scholarship is awarded to third-year core medical students from NSU-COM based on criteria such as exemplary grade-point average, personal statement, letters of recommendation, and curriculum vitae.



The Neurology/Psychiatry Club recently hosted a lunch seminar with Daniel Shaw, Ph.D., M.Ed., associate professor of family medicine, who discussed topics

such as the characteristics that define good teachers and skills that are underemphasized but highly valued during residency training. Pictured (from left) is Dr. Shaw with club officers Tiffany Stroup, Lisa Hudak, Shira Anconina, Jessica Cuello, and Pamela Schmidt.

AHEC Hosts Osteopathic Health Policy Seminar



The AHEC Program, in concert with the Office of the Dean, organized and hosted the 2008 Weekend Seminar on Vulnerable Populations. The seminar, which was held in January, is part of the Osteopathic Health Policy Fellowship Program of Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Ten fellows from throughout the country who are part of this year's fellowship program benefited from the seminar, which included a series of presentations and workshops focusing on vulnerable and special-needs populations such as minorities, the elderly, the disabled, and the mentally ill. Numerous NSU-COM faculty and staff members actively contributed to the success of the weekend program. Included in this year's fellowship class is Samuel Snyder, D.O., FACOI, FASN, FACP, chair of the college's Department of Internal Medicine. According to Nancy Cooper, fellowship coordinator, "The fellows enjoyed a strong agenda of experts on key topics along with the unparalleled hospitality of NSU-COM, and the evaluation received attests to the fellows' high regard for the program."



In January, Drs. Anthony J. Silvagni and James Howell, M.D., M.P.H., along with Delia Celestine, M.P.H., administrative director in the Department of Rural Medicine, visited with Dr. Daniel Kairys and David

Zechman at Glades General Hospital in Belle Glade, Florida. The facility, which is an affiliated NSU-COM teaching hospital, currently has a model 70-bed rural hospital under construction that is scheduled to open in January 2010. A number of NSU-COM students are conducting their fourth-year rural medicine and elective surgery rotations at Glades General Hospital. Also under discussion at this meeting was the development of a family practice rural residency, which is scheduled to be initiated in 2011.

Osterman Named Student D.O. of the Year



In March, OMS-III Travis Osterman, who serves as class of 2009 president, was selected as Student D.O. of the Year by his NSU-COM peers. Among his many accomplishments, Osterman worked with the college's administration to implement the online lecture audio/video recording system known as Apreso, created an SMS-based emergency contact system that NSU eventually adopted university-wide, was named to the Sigma Sigma Phi honor society, and volunteered for various charitable causes.

"There are, of course, many other things that Travis has accomplished here at NSU, such as inspiring others to take on leadership roles, empowering them to do so, and then mentoring them as they develop their leadership skills," said OMS-III Roger Alvarez, who currently serves as Student Government Association (SGA) president. "On a personal note, I owe my leadership experience here at NSU directly to Travis. When I lost the SGA election in my first year (to Travis, of course), he pulled me aside and found a role

for me, as he did for so many others. Finding the skills in those around him and then nurturing them is probably one of Travis' greatest strengths as a leader, and likely one of the attributes that will help him to become the great osteopathic medical hematologist/oncologist he aspires to be.

Student Trio Launches AP Research Project



Posing for a photo are AP Project collaborators Dr. Jon Dodds, Dr. Gabriel P. Suciu, Alina M. Perez, Dr. Steven J. Blinder, Shawna L. De Graff (OMS-I), Kelli A. Burton (OMS-I), Eva-Lynn Morrison, Marlow B. Hernandez (OMS-I), Laurie Parker, and Karen Martin.

researchers are working closely with faculty members from the college's Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) Program as well as those from the middle school division of NSU's University School in order to ensure the study's validity. Participating M.P.H. faculty members are Alina M. Perez, J.D, Gabriel P. Suciu, Ph.D., and Jon Dodds, Ph.D, while University School contributors are Steven J. Blinder, Ed.D., Eva-Lynn Morrison, and Laurie Parker.

If the AP Project remains on schedule, preliminary results will be presented during HPD Research Day, which will take place April 25 at the Signature Grand in Davie, Florida. Final results and analysis will take place during the summer, and the study's findings will be published in the fall.

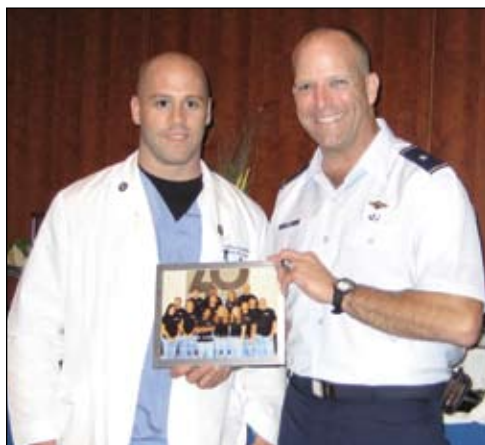
OMS-I students Marlow Hernandez, Shawna De Graff, and Kelli Burton are heading a multidisciplinary research study entitled The AP Project that will examine social perceptions in Broward County adolescents. The project is designed as a continuity-based survey trial with three areas of study that may yield data that can be used to formulate socially relevant programs aimed at improving the long-term health of adolescents.

In addition to an experimental manipulation, the project will use a series of questionnaires in order to understand which factors are contributing to the specific perceptions and influences under study. The study is projected to have over 350 participants from the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

The AP Project



AP Project student researchers Kelli A. Burton (OMS-I), Marlow B. Hernandez (OMS-I), and Shawna L. De Graff (OMS-I).



Matthew Laughlin poses with General Robb.

On February 18, Air Force Brigadier General Douglas Robb, D.O., M.P.H., visited NSU-COM to speak to the college's Association of Military Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (AMOPS) members about issues such as GME possibilities in the

military. The previous evening, General Robb met with faculty members John Pellosie, D.O., M.P.H., and David Thomas, M.D., J.D., as well as some of the military students at a local restaurant for an informal dinner that gave the attendees a chance to interact with the general. "It gave the students a chance to ask General Robb specific questions and allowed them to hear many fascinating stories from his almost 30 years of military service," said OMS-II Matthew Laughlin, who serves as AMOPS president and is a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. "The students were impressed with how personable the general was, and they look forward to his next visit."

COMmunications

■ In January, NSU-COM received a **\$25,000 grant** from the **Florida Association for the Study of Headache and Neurological Disorders** that will be used to enhance neurological education and research at the college.

■ OMS-II students **Preetam Gongidi** and **James Sierakowski** have been selected to participate in the college's 2008-09 Research Fellowship Program, which will commence July 1. During their fellowship year, Gongidi and Sierakowski will have the opportunity to develop an individualized training program, engage in all aspects of the research process, and collaborate with others in the research realm.

■ **Scott Colton**, director of medical communications, had his article titled "Prescription for Progress: Florida Passes Landmark Physician Workforce Legislation" published in the December 2007 issue of *The Advisor*, which is the journal of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions.

■ **OMS-III Terry Moy Brown, M.P.H.**, participated in the grant writing institute and workshops that were components of the Second Annual Sickle Cell Disease Research and Educational Symposium sponsored by Memorial Regional Hospital's Sickle Cell Hospital and held February 20-22 at the Fort Lauderdale Grande Hotel & Yacht Club. Medical students from across the country participated in the symposium, which featured presentations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health.



Pictured (from left) are Alberto Caban-Martinez, Dr. Emery Salom, Yesenia Arias, D.O. (family medicine resident at PGH), Laura Soto, D.O. (family medicine resident at PGH), and Alejandro Perez.

OMS-III students Alejandro Perez and Alberto Caban-Martinez, M.P.H., under the guidance and support of Emory Salom, M.D., clinical assistant professor of OB/GYN at Palmetto General Hospital (PGH), recently published a case report that has been accepted for publication in the *International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. The article, titled "Sub-Splenic Ectopic Pregnancy Adjacent to a Communicating Rudimentary Uterine Horn," looks at a rare ectopic pregnancy where a female with müllerian agenesis and rudimentary uteri developed an ectopic pregnancy. Caban-Martinez also coauthored an article titled "Respiratory Effects of Secondhand Smoke Exposure Among Young Adults Residing in a 'Clean' Indoor Air State" that appeared in the February 2008 issue of the *Journal of Community Health*.

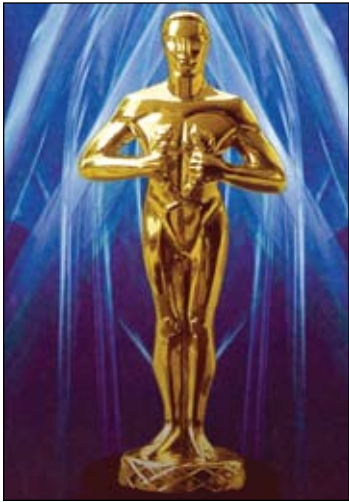


Laura Tokayer receives her plaque of appreciation from Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H., associate dean for education, planning, and research.

Laura Tokayer, M.P.A., who spent 12 years working as either assistant director or director of institutional data analysis and development, left the college in March to accept a position with the Florida Heart Research Institute in Miami. Prior to her departure, NSU-COM coordinated a

heartfelt farewell party that allowed both staff and faculty members to express their appreciation to and affection for Tokayer.

NSU-COM Receives Five Stuey Award Nominations



The College of Osteopathic Medicine was recognized in five categories when nominations were announced for the Ninth Annual NSU Student Life Achievement Awards. The awards, also known as the Stueys, serve as a celebration of NSU's best in leadership, scholarship, service, integrity, commitment, involvement, and responsibility. A summary of the Stuey Awards ceremony, which will take place April 15 in the Miniaci Performing Arts Center on campus, will appear in the summer 2008 issue of *COM Outlook*.

Following are the NSU-COM Stuey Award nominees:

Administrator of the Year

Lynne Cawley, M.Sc.

Student of the Year

Roger Alvarez (OMS-III)

Student Government of the Year

NSU-COM SGA

Co-Curricular Advisor of the Year

Robert Hasty, D.O.

Graduate Organization of the Year

Student Association of Obstetrics/Gynecology

Tetanus Immunization Project Benefits Africans



Delali Blavo
prepares to give
a shot to an
African villager.

Who would have thought the most common cause of maternal and neonatal mortality anywhere in the world in the year 2007 would be tetanus?

To help combat this dilemma, a Tetanus Immunization Project (TIP) was implemented last December in an underserved and impoverished African district of Tafi under the supervision of OMS-I Delali Blavo. The initiative was planned and developed by Jonathan Coleman, an NSU premed student, through the mentorship of Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.P.H., and T.M., FACOP, director of the Master of Public Health Program, in collaboration with a nonprofit organization called International Health Initiatives and the Ministry of Health in Ghana, West Africa.

Tetanus was identified, through a needs assessment by health authorities, as the most common cause of maternal and neonatal mortality in the region.

Neonatal tetanus, which occurs in the first month of life, has a case fatality rate of 70 to 100 percent and has been associated with women who do not have access to vaccination services. Maternal tetanus is usually acquired through insanitary birthing conditions that result in the contamination of wounds with dust and coming into contact with unsterilized surfaces. The toxins produced by the bacteria *Clostridium tetani* cause debilitating clinical signs and symptoms that include severe painful muscle spasms and convulsions that manifest as a fixed smile, locked jaw, and an arching back. Studies have demonstrated that immunization of women of child-bearing age is the most effective way to reduce the incidence of maternal and neonatal tetanus.

A fundraising effort undertaken by the TIP planning team enabled 20 public health nurses, directed by a district medical officer, to administer the tetanus vaccination to 1,170 women ranging in age from 15 to 40 years in five villages – Tafi Atome, Tafi Abuike, Tafi Mador, Tafi Agome, and Tafi Konda – over a two-day period. Traditional drums were beaten in the villages to announce the event, which took place using portable coolers to store the vaccines because of a lack of electricity. The single well in the village was the only source of water. As a result of a community-endorsed health promotion and vaccination education effort preceding the event, the compliance rate for the tetanus vaccination was remarkable as an estimated 60 percent of the targeted population participated.

The TIP initiative, which served as an eye-opening experience for Delali Blavo, was very well received by the chiefs and elders of the villages, the district health authorities, and the community as a whole. "We anticipate, through surveillance and evaluations, that maternal mortality due to tetanus will be significantly reduced in the Tafi region," Blavo said.



The American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOF) student chapter has been working closely with the HOPE Outreach Center in Davie, Florida, to provide support in the local

community by coordinating a yearlong canned food drive for HOPE's food pantry and asking members to bring non-perishables to each monthly meeting. The ACOFP also sponsored a cans-for-pizza promotion during HPD finals week and offered studious students an inexpensive dinner alternative—one canned good or one dollar for a slice of pizza. To learn more about the HOPE Outreach programs and how you can help in the local community, please visit www.hope-outreachcenterinc.org/. In the accompanying photo, ACOFP officers Jody Coonradt (vice president, right) and Vivian Lo (treasurer, left) meet with HOPE Outreach administrators Helen Shinnars (second from right) and Sister Germaine to present the collected donations and a \$100 check.



On March 5, the Christian Medical and Dental Association's (CMDA) student chapter held its annual pinning ceremony, which involves the students taking the CMDA oath and making a commitment to serve

God throughout their careers in medicine and dentistry. Seventeen students participated in the ceremony, which also featured a speech by Dr. Eileen Ramsaran, clinical director of the Urban Mercy clinic in North Miami, who discussed the impact her faith has had on her career.

According to the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, applications to U.S. colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs) have already reached record highs again this year, with many applications yet to be received before the mid-April deadline. The application numbers reflect a six-year period during which several new osteopathic medical schools have been built and thousands of additional potential medical students have applied to enter one of the fastest-growing health care sectors. Some 11,650 individuals are hoping to fill one of the 4,462 total fall 2008 seats available at the nation's 25 COMs and their branch campuses, compared with last year's record-setting 11,459.

Matar Recounts Rewarding Rural Experience in Jamaica

In February, OMS-IV Julie Matar had the opportunity to embark on one of her most fulfilling rotations when she participated



in a rural selective in Jamaica under the tutelage of Dr. Palomino-Lue, who has been a pediatrician in Jamaica for over 40 years. Matar, who is a native and citizen of Jamaica, has volunteered in two of the college's Jamaican medical outreach trips. Through her experiences, "each encounter with a patient is guaranteed to be different,"

she explained. "And each treatment must take into account the various social and health issues the patient has."

Because she has been so moved by her international endeavors, Matar believes everyone should experience a true rural rotation or volunteer in a medical outreach program. "Growing up in Jamaica, one sees firsthand the poverty, struggles, and poor health conditions that exist," she explained. "So when the chance of assisting arose, I was thrilled to be a part of it."

Thanks to her recent selective rotation, Matar witnessed cases she could only read about in textbooks, such as dengue fever, benign rolandic epilepsy, and type 3 Gaucher's disease. "This has been a truly unforgettable experience, and I honestly encourage everyone to do a month abroad so as to broaden your horizons and experiences on many health care, social, and economic matters that may not arise in our everyday lives in America."



On February 6, the ACOFP student chapter welcomed Steve Rubin, D.O., national ACOFP president, to the NSU campus. Dr. Rubin, who was on his national tour of osteopathic medical

schools, spoke with students at a lunch meeting about the future of family practice and how to handle the business aspect of owning a practice. Pictured are Joseph De Gaetano, D.O., M.S.Ed., FAAFP, FAFOP, assistant dean of clinical curriculum and GME and ACOFP faculty advisor (left), Dr. Rubin (fourth from left), and the 2007-2008 ACOFP Executive Board.

AHEC Develops Regional Community-Based Nursing Training Initiatives

As part of its continuing efforts to promote and develop effective and close interdisciplinary collaboration with other academic units at NSU, the AHEC Program has partnered with the Nursing Department of the NSU College of Allied Health and Nursing on a wide range of community-based initiatives designed to bring training to nursing students and practicing nurses throughout its 19-county service region. Resulting from the excellent leadership and support provided from several of the nursing faculty members, including Diane Whitehead, Ed.D., R.N., associate dean and nursing chair, and Mary Ellen Mitchell-Rosen, M.S.N., R.N., assistant professor of community nursing, AHEC has developed model curricula and linkages for training nursing students on tobacco cessation and prevention.

This curriculum is now being utilized in numerous community colleges throughout South and Central Florida, including Indian River Community College, Palm Beach Community College, and Edison College, among many others. Similarly, through this partnership with AHEC, the NSU Nursing Department is developing a specialized program to bring regional training on a wide range of topics of importance to public health and school health nurses.

"Given the shortage of nurses in primary care settings and the critical role that nurses play in bringing health services and education to the underserved, this relationship is extremely important in enabling AHEC to maximize its impact in rural and remote areas throughout the region," said Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed., associate dean for community affairs and AHEC Program director. "The close partnership with the NSU Nursing Program and its talented and dedicated faculty has been one of the true highlights of our AHEC success over the past several years."

Levine, Shah Receive FOMA Student Awards

During the 105th Annual Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) Convention in Fort Lauderdale, held February 21-24, OMS-II Mehul Shah was presented with a FOMA Student District Scholarship Award for possessing leadership skills, supporting FOMA student district society initiatives, and showcasing significant interest in the osteopathic profession and osteopathic manipulative medicine. In addition to receiving a commemorative plaque, Shah earned a \$500 cash award. During the convention, OMS-III Mathew Levine received recognition from the Advocates of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (AFOMA), which presented him with a \$250 AFOMA Believes in You Scholarship Award, which is partly based on a student's interest in osteopathic medicine, activities in the profession, and future plans.



Mathew Levine (left) receives his AFOMA Believes in You Scholarship Award from Janet Burns, AFOMA president, and Anthony Ottaviani, D.O., M.P.H., FACOI, FCCP, immediate past president of FOMA.



Pictured (from left) are: Gregory James, D.O., M.P.H., FACOF, chairman of the FOMA Awards and Scholarship Committee, Mehul Shah, LECOM student scholarship recipient; and Dr. Ottaviani.

Getting to Know the Student National Medical Association (SNMA)

By the SNMA Executive Board

The Student National Medical Association (SNMA) is the nation's oldest and largest student organization focused on the needs and concerns of medical students of color. Established in 1964 by medical students from Howard University and Meharry medical schools, the SNMA chapters are committed to serving the health needs of underserved communities and communities of color. In addition, the SNMA is dedicated to ensuring that medical education and services are culturally sensitive to the needs of diverse populations and increasing the number of students of color entering and completing medical school.

NSU's SNMA chapter was founded in 1991 on the then Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine campus in North Miami Beach, Florida. The idea to start the local SNMA chapter came in 1990 from a second-year medical student named Anthony Perrin, who was one of the core founders of the organization along with Paula Anderson, Cedric Barnes, Octavia Cannon, Melissa Young, and Alice Fung-Chung. Dr. Cyril Blavo served as faculty advisor.

The group was very creative in its fundraising efforts, providing sing-a-grams for its class on special occasions and selling ice cream sundaes. The members also participated in school talent shows dressed in African attire and singing folk songs that were taught to the group by Dr. Blavo, who is from Ghana. SNMA members quickly became well known on campus for their innovative activities and high level of involvement.

Over the last 17 years, the college's SNMA chapter has worked diligently to enrich the student medical education experience while serving communities in the tri-county area, earning the NSU-COM Student Organization Outstanding Recognition Award during the 2003-2004 academic year. As a group, SNMA members have strived to diversify the face of medicine not only as advocates of minority education but as future osteopathic health professionals.



Attendees at a recent SNMA mixer (from left) are Inaki Bent, Damilola Olupona, Dr. Paula Anderson-Worts, Audrea Vaughan, and Candace White.



Pictured (clockwise starting from below left) are Delali Blavo, Lynn Morrissey, Berry Pierre, Tamika Jackson, Calvin Nathaniel, Dr. Nelson Adams, Audrea Vaughan, Inaki Bent, Candace White, Dr. Paula Anderson-Worts, and Damilola Olupona.

Black History Month Celebrations

Each year, the SNMA has brought the celebration of black history to the Health Professions Division here at NSU. "This year's theme—A Journey Through Today—represents a reflection on the richness of our history as a people and a student organization and its influence on our paths today and the future steps we will take," said Audrea Vaughan, OMS-II and current SNMA president.

The SNMA also hosted weekly brown bag sessions that were meant to encourage discussions about various issues affecting the black community and other minority populations across the nation and world. The first session, led by OMS-I Watson Ducatel, was titled "A Brief Look at History/What Does 'Race' Mean?" Discussion focused on the intangible description of race and its different meanings for each individual. This session helped those present gain a better understanding of the term, its history in the United States, and the reasons for tension between races often viewed as more or less inferior to others.

The second session, led by Vaughan, was titled "Jena 6: A Horrid Look at History." The events that highlighted Jena, Louisiana, last year were reviewed, and the racial injustice that is subconsciously encrypted in the judicial system was analyzed. The third session, titled "Barack Obama: Future President of the U.S.?" was led by Damilola Olupona, OMS-II and current SNMA vice president. Discussion of this current affair posed the question of whether or not America and the world are ready for the United States to have a president of black heritage. The last session, titled "Why Do Health Care Disparities Continue to Plague People of Color Worldwide/What Do You Plan to Do About it?," was led by Camille Chandler,

OMS-II and current SNMA treasurer. This culminating session was a passionate discourse about the multifaceted issues that strengthen the health disparities gap.

In order to spread awareness, daily trivia was sent out to the first- and second-year medical students during Black History Month in February. Each weekday in February, a question was emailed to the class and SNMA listserves. A Target gift card was awarded each week to the student who responded with the most correct answers, and in most cases, because of the great student participation, whoever was the “early bird” with a response. The first week focused on general black history and was followed with themed weeks about arts/entertainment, military, and sports, with each paying tribute to the accomplishments of a variety of African American pioneers.

The Third Annual Black History Banquet, held on February 28, was an evening of celebration that culminated the month’s activities. NSU students from the osteopathic medicine, dental, pharmacy, and nursing programs were present to enjoy the festivities together. The candlelit event was enriched with spectacular food and amazing entertainment. The evening revolved around the theme A Tribute to Our Past, Paving the Way to Our Future, which was an honorary dedication to leaders that have paved the paths that many are able to walk today.

The West African fashion show showcased a variety of beautiful Ghanaian garments modeled by students of the osteopathic medicine program. Nelson Adams III, M.D., the 108th and current president of the national Student National Medical Association, was the keynote speaker and gave an empowering speech entitled “Eliminating Racial Disparities in Health Care.” That evening, Dr. Adams left attendees with four words of encouragement that health professionals must embody in order to make a difference: commitment, collaboration, compassion, and competency.

Business as Usual...

Business continued as usual with fundraising efforts for the 2008 medical mission trip to Jamaica. For the past eight years under our current advisor, Dr. Anderson-Worts, NSU-COM’s SNMA has actively supported the efforts of the medical mission trip to the West Indian island. The trip is an opportunity for professionals



Transfixed students at the suture clinic during a Medical Explorers event.



and students in the medical field to make a difference in the lives of people of lower socioeconomic status by offering a variety of free medical services. To support those attending the mission trip, the SNMA organizes regular patty and bake sales each month. Funds raised also go toward the purchase of vitamins and medical supplies that will be used during the trip.

In addition, the SNMA and Sigma Sigma Phi have joined forces to host a program called Medical Explorers at NSU-COM. The program is designed for high school students interested in any of the health professions including, but not limited to, medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, and optometry. The program entails students coming to NSU to learn about the medical profession, the college application process, and what it takes to be successful in each field. Currently, there are 32 high school students from Broward County and the surrounding areas in this year’s program. The students get the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities such as suture labs with pigs’ feet, sports medicine ankle wrapping, and ultrasound machinery utilization. Students are even introduced to the principles of osteopathic medicine, which for some is their first interaction with an osteopathic physician. The program’s objective is to inspire, enlighten, and expose students to the fields of medicine while encouraging them to pursue their dreams.

One of the major issues among students in the Health Professions Division is the disconnect they feel with not only students from other HPD programs but also the strained communication with undergraduate students here at NSU. With a true voice missing at the undergraduate level, the SNMA has taken the step to help bridge the gap between undergraduate and graduate students here at the university. The organization has decided to bring an undergraduate chapter of MAPS (Multicultural Association of Pre-Health Students) to NSU. In August 2007, the SNMA appointed OMS-I Berry Pierre to the position of MAPS liaison and undergraduate chairperson. He was enamored with the opportunity to help organize the first MAPS chapter being that he had contributed to the first chapter of MAPS organized at his alma mater, Florida State University.

Berry was fortunate enough to cross paths with Nick Rocco, the current Pre-Medical Society president. Rocco expressed to members of his society that it was imperative to get the MAPS organization off the ground in order to build mentoring relationships with the graduate student body. With Dr. Deanne Roopnarine, an undergraduate faculty member who has agreed to serve as faculty advisor, along with over 20 interested students from the Pre-Medical Society, MAPS should become an official student organization here on campus in fall 2008. The SNMA plans to support the chapter and offer outreach activities such as mock interviews, tutoring, and scholarships for its MAPS members.

Looking Back...at Acceptance and Recognition



Arnold Melnick, D.O., M.Sc.

While the osteopathic profession has always been an independent group, it has a history of needing—or wanting (and deserving!)—acceptance and recognition from time to time. So it was no surprise when this arose again during the development of SECOM.

Early on, around 1980 or 1981, we were unable to find a physiology instructor for our freshman class. Logically, we contacted a member of the faculty of the University of

Miami (UM) School of Medicine, who was willing but indicated that he needed clearance to do outside lecturing. We don't know the inside machinations that went on, but he was told by a university official, "They're our competition. You may not teach there." I think we were more crushed that they viewed us as competition than by the failure to recruit a lecturer.

Skip ahead a few years. State Senator Sherman Winn, a good friend of both institutions, decided it was time for the two schools to work together. He arranged a meeting between Bernard Fogel, M.D., the then dean of UM, and Mort Terry and me. It was a friendly and productive encounter and from it grew a splendid relationship. In fact, years later, we awarded Dr. Fogel an honorary degree in appreciation of his work in the field of medical education and for his friendship with us. Over the years, we cooperated on a number of projects, and today, even though we are both retired, I continue to count him as a real friend.

When we started to think about exploring some sort of affiliation or merger, it seemed natural and logical to begin with UM. Mort Terry and I invited Dr. Fogel and some of his senior staff to join us for lunch one day to explore what options might be open to both of us. About 30 of us were seated—at tables of four—in the second-floor auditorium of the converted old hospital. I sat, by chance, with one of the UM assistant deans. Halfway through lunch, he leaned over to me and said, sub rosa, "Why are you looking to merge with us? You have done here in a few years what it would have taken us—with our educational bureaucracy—20 or 30 years to do." Another step forward in recognition!

We had developed a warm and cordial relationship with Dr. Fogel, and our talks continued. After some time, he invited Mort Terry and me to lunch at his office to meet with him and the head of the university. However, UM's chief administrator made it clear he wanted nothing to do with any merger talks, and that ended that. Of course, we didn't know then that his move was really a hidden step forward for us.

Interestingly, several years later, I consulted one of UM's department chairmen for medical reasons. Within 10 minutes of meeting him

(a stranger to me), he spontaneously said, "We were crazy not to merge with SECOM."

I can't remember how it began, but it was in the late 1980s I believe that the Council of Florida Medical School Deans was convened that represented the state's medical schools, which at that time consisted of the University of Florida, the University of Miami, the University of South Florida, and SECOM. We met a couple of times a year and had many interactive, collegial meetings.

A few years later at one of our sessions, the council was discussing initiating a research project, and I sat there knowing SECOM had no real research facility available. I asked for the floor and said, in effect, "Since SECOM is not a research institution, we will be unable to participate but will yield to the three other schools and support and cooperate in any way we can." One dean, from a school that had originally been hostile to us, leaned over, looked down the table at me, and said firmly, "We are four medical schools, and you will be included in everything." Another step forward!

In recent years, Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni was elected chairman of this council, which was another step forward in recognition of our osteopathic college, of the osteopathic profession, and, of course, of Dr. Silvagni.

Occasionally, the search for recognition and acceptance is an internal thing—no outsiders, no prejudice against the osteopathic profession. In our very first college accreditation inspection, hoping to be approved to start a school, Joseph Namey, D.O., then a major guru in the American Osteopathic Association, visited us with a team of hand-picked examiners. One particular member of the team, a basic scientist from a well-established college, seemed to be nit-picking, finding fault with every little thing. We were sweating and worried. After an hour or so of this, Dr. Namey, who went on to succeed me as dean eight years later, recessed the meeting and asked our annoyer to step outside.

It turned out to be a very brief interruption, but after that, everything went smoothly. As far as we can reconstruct it, Joe simply said something like, "This is an evaluation for a new school. It is not expected to be a completely functioning school. We will insist on all necessary standards, but we won't harass them. Now, if you ever want to be on another accreditation visit team again, you will stop what you are doing." Another step forward!

As you can see, we took many steps forward. Since we know that each mile begins with one step, we can look back and see the many miles our college of osteopathic medicine and the osteopathic profession have come in recognition and acceptance.



Dr. Arnold Melnick is the founding dean of Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (the precursor to NSU-COM). His pithy columns serve as a humorous and insightful bridge to the past—and remind us of how far our college has come in a relatively short period of time.

Heidi Anderson-Lane, Ed.D., joined the faculty in January as director of patient-centered education. In this capacity, Dr. Lane is responsible for providing leadership in the development of problem-based learning and objective structured clinical examination modules, including the use of simulation, training standardized patients, and providing related student instruction.

Rogério Faillace, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics, was recognized by the Brazilian magazine *Conexao* in January for providing medical services to the South Florida Brazilian community in 2007.

Jay M. Fleisher Ph.D., associate professor of public health, and **Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc.**, professor of public health and director of biomedical informatics, will have their research article titled "Relationship Between Physician Supply and Breast Cancer Survival: A Geographic Approach" published in the August 2008 issue of the *Journal of Community Health*. Dr. Fleisher also worked closely with the University of Florida to analyze epidemiological data related to its research study focusing on whether beach sand could pose a health risk to beachgoers.

James Howell, M.D., M.P.H., professor and chair of the Department of Rural Medicine, was appointed to a three-year term on the Health Facilities Authorities by the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners. He also received a recognition award from Palm Beach County Medical Society Services, where he served as president from 2005 through 2007, for his outstanding leadership abilities.

Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H., professor of family medicine and public health and director of the Center for Bioterrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness, served on the ASPR panel at the 2008 Public Health Preparedness Summit, which centered on the theme Measuring Preparedness: Celebrating Our Success, Challenging Our Future. The symposium was held February 19-22 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc., professor of public health and director of biomedical informatics, coauthored several articles that appeared in various publications over the past several months. These include: "Cognitive Deficits in Multiple Sclerosis," which was originally published by the National Multiple Sclerosis Foundation and recently reprinted by Omnigraphics Inc. in the *Health Reference Series Multiple Sclerosis Sourcebook*; "Open Access Content in Pharmacy-Focused Journals" in *Technology and Health Care*; and "Searching for Evidence in M. Law (Ed.)" that appeared in the second edition of *Evidence-Based Rehabilitation: A Guide to Practice*. Last November,



Dr. Anderson-Lane



Dr. Howell



Dr. Levy



Dr. Munoz



Ms. Perez



Dr. Warhaftig



Dr. Wood

Dr. Lou and members of the CBAP team presented a lecture on "Emergency Preparedness for Children with Autism: A Needs Assessment for a Vulnerable Population" at the 135th American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C.

Morton Morris, D.O., J.D., FAOAO, HPD executive dean for professional affairs, served as program chair of the 14th National Conference of AOA-Accredited Category 1 CME Sponsors, which took place January 10-12 in Scottsdale, Arizona. During the symposium, which featured the theme Fit for Life CME Programs, Dr. Morris explored how to enhance the osteopathic CME programs currently available and expand future offerings.

Krishnamurti Munoz, D.O., joined the COM family in December 2007 as an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine, where she is participating in student teaching and clinical patient care.

Robert S. Oller, D.O., CEO of the NSU Health Care Centers, served on the American Diabetes Association's 17th Annual Conference Planning Committee, which met March 14 at the Hyatt Regency/James L. Knight Convention Center in Miami, Florida. He also was asked to serve on the National Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) Florida Chapter Board of Directors. The organization is an association of major group health care providers that addresses issues related to health care operations. The local chapter was formed in order to deal with payment credentialing and other issues related to health care in Florida.

Edward Packer, D.O., FAAP, FACOP, associate professor and chair of the Department of Pediatrics, served on the COMLEX Part II Referencing Committee for the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners in Chicago, Illinois. He also gave presentations to parents of young children in the Start Smart program at NSU's Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center on stimulating reading in children and promoting healthy brain development through early childhood activities.

Naushira Pandya, M.D., CMD, associate professor and chair of the Department of Geriatrics, coauthored an article with several NSU Health Professions Division faculty members titled "Eyes on Diabetes: A Multidisciplinary Patient Education Intervention" that was published in the January 2008 issue of *Diabetes Educator*. She also served as chair and main contributor to the March 2008 publication of the revised American Medical Directors Association clinical practice guideline on "Management of Diabetes in the Long-Term Care Setting" and had

her article titled "Diagnosis of Osteoporosis in LTC: Real-Life Issues" published in the November 2007 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*. In addition, Dr. Pandya presented lectures to various audiences in recent months on topics such as "Management of Thyroid Dysfunction in the Elderly," "Stroke Prevention: A Case-Based Approach," "Management of Anemia in LTC: A Case-Based Approach," and "Health Policy Issues Affecting the Elderly."

Alina M. Perez, J.D., assistant professor of public health, along with NSU faculty members and students from NSU's Institute for Lifelong Learning and Fischler School of Education and Human Services, conducted an assessment of Broward County's readiness to engage baby boomers in civic activities. Assessment results were included in a report published by the Community Foundation of Broward called *Re-Engage for Good: A Call to Action*. Perez also presented a lecture on "Avoiding Common Household Dangers" to a group of seniors at the Classic Residence by Hyatt in Plantation, Florida.

Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D. R.D., who serves as professor and project manager for NSU-COM's Center for Bioterrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness, had her nutrition article titled "Small Changes Can Yield Big Results" published in the January 16 issue of the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*. She also was quoted in the newspaper's January 21 edition in the "Size Matters" article about losing weight.

Khin Tu, M.D., associate professor of anatomy, was invited by the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health of Indonesia to speak at the First International Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Course in December 2007. During his visit to Indonesia, Dr. Tu taught orthopedic residents at the general hospital in Bali, served as an external examiner for the postgraduate orthopedic exam at the University of Indonesia, and presented lectures on "Mass Casualty Management," "Injury Prevention," and "Biological, Chemical, and Radiological Incident Management."

Monica Warhaftig, D.O., assistant professor of geriatrics, gave a presentation on "Restless Leg Syndrome" at North Shore Hospital in Miami, Florida, and discussed "Medical Prevention" at a local senior center. She also worked closely with Dr. Pandya as a contributor to the March 2008 publication of the revised American Medical Directors Association clinical practice guideline on "Pressure Ulcers in the Long-Term Care Setting."

Ralph Wood, D.O., who had been serving as assistant medical director of the NSU medical clinics, was recently appointed as chair of the Department of Family Medicine.



Drs. Lou and Shamus Make Presentations in Shanghai

In October 2007, Jennie Lou, M.D., M.Sc., professor of public health and director of biomedical informatics, and Eric Shamus, Ph.D., associate professor of OPP, were invited to provide lectures and clinical demonstrations at the Shanghai Medical College of Fudan University in Shanghai, China. During their one-week visiting professorship, clinical demonstrations and lectures were presented on topics such as "Rehabilitation After Joint Replacement," "Cognitive and Perceptual Assessment Strategies After Stroke," and "Manual Techniques For Rehabilitation After Stroke." Additional academic exchanges are being planned in the future between the two medical schools.



FOMA Convention Faculty Presentations

A number of NSU-COM full-time and clinical faculty members made presentations at the 105th Annual Florida Osteopathic Medical Association Convention, which was held February 21-24 at the Hyatt Regency Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale:

Barbara Arcos, D.O. – "OMT Workshop"

David Boesler, D.O. – "OMT Workshop"

Sally Bragg, R.N., M.S.N. – "Eye Hazards: Emergency Response and Disaster Recovery"

Natasha Bray, D.O. – "Hepatitis Review"

Stanley Cohen, Ed.D. – "Medical Ethics Review"

Joseph Giaimo, D.O. – "Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease"

Max Gilbert, D.O. – "Diagnosis and Manipulative Care for Thoracic Outlet Syndrome"

Robert Hasty, D.O. – "Prevention of Medical Errors" and "Coronary Artery Disease in Women"

Andrew Kusienski, D.O. – "OMT Workshop"

Archie McLean, D.O. – "HIV/AIDS"

Morton Morris, D.O., J.D. – "Risk Management"

Anthony Ottaviani, D.O. – "Sleep Disorders"

Naushira Pandya, M.D., CMD – "Thyroid Dysfunction in Older Adults"

Joel Rose, D.O. – "Modern Benefits of Potent Statin Therapy"

Diane Sanders-Cepeda, D.O. – "Fibromyalgia"

Eric Shamus, Ph.D. – "Diagnosis and Manipulative Care for Thoracic Outlet Syndrome"

William Silverman, D.O. – "Obesity and Metabolic Syndrome"

Jason Sniffen, D.O. – "Bacterial Infections"

Joel Stein, D.O. – "Uses and Abuses of Controlled Substances"

Monica Warhaftig, D.O. – "Domestic Violence"

Rivera Recounts Remarkable Experiences in Ghana

Earlier this year, OMS-IV student Angel Rivera returned to an indigent area of Ghana to do a rural selective rotation at the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalergiu. What transpired during his one-month educational excursion left him exhilarated, exhausted—and humbled. In the following article, Rivera shares his memories of an experience that deepened his commitment to and knowledge of what being a caring and holistic physician really means.

In February 2008, NSU-COM allowed me the privilege of traveling to Ghana, Africa, to conduct my rural selective rotation at the Baptist Medical Centre, which would be my second trip to this underserved medical region of the world. This was special for me as I had grown passionate about the purpose of providing my medical knowledge and ability (that is still being developed) to individuals who need this attention.

As I made my travel arrangements, I discovered that NSU would be sending not only me but two of its alumni to Ghana—Dr. Julie Kang, an OB/GYN from the class of 1987, and Dr. Christopher Sizemore from the class of 2005 who is a PGY3 OB/GYN resident at Vanderbilt University. The trip was supposed to serve the purpose of allowing me to assist in an area where sufficient medical staffing is lacking, but it became so much more than that.

Imagine being a 15-year-old girl who had delivered her first baby three months ago but had suffered an IUFD (intrauterine fetal demise) along with the complication of labor arrest, which meant the fetus was stuck halfway down the pelvis. On my first day in the hospital, I had the opportunity to interview the girl. Upon obtaining the HPI and doing a pelvic examination, which was done in the minor procedure room but lead to an examination under anesthesia, significant internal damage was discovered. At the completion of the exam, Dr. Kang, a general surgeon named Dr. Kerr, and I diagnosed a VVF (vesicle vaginal fistula) and two RVFs (rectal vaginal fistulas).

The patient had a VVF on the anterior wall of the vagina and two RVFs on the posterior aspects of the vaginal wall. I knew what the medical terminology meant but was shocked by the physical presentation (feces and urine uncontrollably coming out of the vaginal opening) and pathophysiology (continued prolonged pressure on the vaginal mucosa leading to ischemia and necrosis of the tissue) of the disease. I was informed by my attending that our options were limited, and although there was no threat to the mortality of the patient, the living conditions and morbidity of the patient had been changed forever. As a result, the only medical option we could provide was inserting a colostomy on the patient, which would allow the rectal mucosa area to heal, proceed on repairing the VVF, and then wait up to a year with the colostomy to repair the two RVFs.



Angel Rivera with a patient at Baptist Medical Centre in Nalergiu.



Altruistic Alumni: Dr. Julie Kang and Dr. Christopher Sizemore.

As the days went by, I sensed a different attitude in the hospital between the patients, medical staff, and physicians. Doctors were friends, not just doctors. It wasn't Dr. Kang, Dr. Fail, or Dr. Seizmore. It was, "Hi, Dr. Julie," "Hi, Dr. Jack," or "Hi, Dr. Chris." There was a mutual respect for each other, and a sense of appreciation that we were there to help and do our best. There also was no sense of superiority and inferiority between the patients, staff, and physicians. I found this attitude refreshing and motivating because it reminded me of why I choose medicine as my life's ambition. In fact, it motivated me to learn everything. The medical resources and medical technology at the site were extremely limited; consequently, I needed to know as much as I could about the disease state, adapt to what was available, and then provide adequate medical attention to my patient.

This experience also allowed me to develop as a physician. It forced me to cut the safety net, or should I say my dependence on the attending? It was me, "The Doctor," writing the orders in the middle of the night when I was on call. I was the one making the decisions. I must say my first night there was indeed scary, but I felt this rush, a true sense of confidence because everything I had studied and been training for the past four years was really in my brain. All I had to do was pull it out and put it into practice.

My trip seemed to go by quickly, but during the time I spent at Baptist Medical Centre, I saw a range of cases that included basic respiratory distress, pleural effusion (which I drained), retained placenta (which I dilated and curettaged), large bladder stone (which I removed serving as first assist in surgery), and incision and draining. I also dealt with some truly sad cases that ended in death, such as a child who fell out of a tree but died three hours after I took his HPI, a woman who hemorrhaged out postpartum and died, and a child with terminal active TB who passed away two days after I saw him for the first time.

The experience opened my eyes as to why we are needed as physicians, but it also made me aware of how good we have it—and how much is taken for granted in our country. It also made me more motivated and more confident in my knowledge and skills as a physician. The experience humbled me at times, but it also opened my eyes to how precious life is and how short it can be. The people of Nalergiu live in surroundings that most people would consider truly awful, but they are still able to smile and seem happy.

The first time I visited this area, I grew fond of the small town, but this trip I absolutely fell in love with it. I will try to return again so I can continue to make a difference not only in our country but in others as well.



Guatemala Medical Outreach Trip Gains Government Recognition

By OMS-II Nat Kittisarapong

Between January 17-28, DOCARE International, Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine, and Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Colorado teamed up to provide greatly needed health care to families in Panahachel and other mountain communities around Lake Atitlan in Guatemala.

Now in its ninth year, the 45-member team consisting of doctors, nurses, medical students, EMTs, residents, and community volunteers was greeted upon its arrival by a representative from the Office of the First Lady of Guatemala. In what turned out to be a surprising and appreciated welcome, a press conference had been coordinated to discuss the necessity of such missions and the assistance they provide to the people of Guatemala. In San Jose Chacaya, on the last day of providing health care, the volunteers were honored with a visit from Guatemala's first lady, Sandra Torres De Colom, who commended the work of DOCARE volunteers

and pledged the government's support on future medical missions before a crowd of over 200 villagers.

Once the medical mission got underway, the group was split into two teams. Each morning, we journeyed into the mountains in small vans or crossed the lake to isolated villages, set up makeshift clinics, and – with the help of local Mayan translators – saw over 900 patients at eight sites. Drugs, pencils, toothbrushes, soap, and toothpaste for the villagers had been donated by local doctors or students in Colorado and Florida or were purchased by money collected through fundraising by medical students.

As first- and second-year medical students, we learned to apply the skills we had been taught in the classroom alongside the watchful eyes of doctors, nurses, and residents, seeing cases we would never forget. As I shined the otoscope into the ear of an 82-year-old man complaining of bad hearing, I was greeted by a wall of black earwax, while in

the next "room" my colleagues saw the tracks of scabies on the tan skin of a Guatemalan child whose eyes glistened at them with curiosity.

In another village across the lake, my other colleagues were seeing a crying child with teeth that had been eroded by cavities and a woman with eyes clouded over by an epithelial growth called a pterygium. Our Colorado premedical undergraduates learned about the various indigenous fungi and parasites that were afflicting their patients in the makeshift laboratory alongside fourth-year medical students and our microbiologist, Dr. Harold Laubauch. Outside, community volunteers signed in, weighed, and played with eager local villagers who had lined up against the dusty yellow walls of the local schools that had been transformed into our makeshift clinics. In the pharmacy, our nurses, students, and volunteers were surrounded by villagers holding white paper prescriptions as they waited patiently for their free and much-needed medications that could not otherwise be afforded. At the end of the day, we were surrounded by little hands as they reached up to receive our small gifts of toothbrushes, soap, and toothpaste.

Unfortunately, we were limited by the short-term assistance our mission provided. Once the materials and medicine were used up, there would be no more to distribute until we return the following year. Infections and diseases continue to flourish here because of extreme poverty and lack of sanitation. However, the first lady of Guatemala's involvement and interest gave us hope that the impact of our medical missions has reached beyond the borders of the villages that were being assisted and perhaps will draw more attention and funding so the needs of the various villages can further be assessed.



Health Care Providers

Ron Bekic, D.O.	Camille Bentley, D.O.	Hans Bez, D.O.
Alicia Butler, R.N.	Jennifer Capezuti, D.O.	Almari Ginory, D.O.
Harold Laubauch, Ph.D.	Marianne Holler, D.O.	
Andrea Hutchinson, R.N.	Daniel Kesdan, M.D.	
Kathleen Lomando, R.N.	Eugene Manuel, D.O.	Olga Martinez, D.O.
John Pellosie, D.O.	Jodi Pratt, EMT	Micah Roten, R.N.
Mauricio Sabagal, D.O.	Zsuzsanna Seybold, M.D.	
Dawn Vogeler, EMT-P	Linda Waidelich, R.N.	

Students

Amy Anderson	Andrew Breitberg	Doris Wun Chan
Marlow Hernandez	Kalif Kendig	Natwalee Kittisarapong
Sneha Lokesh	Meena Makhijani	Gayatri Menon
Laura Rubinate	Brooke Schneider	Liam Sperl (premed)
Tabatha Thrasher (premed)	Brandon Weeks	

Community Volunteers

Susan Banks	Stephan Beutow (premed)	Kathleen Fowler
Jean-Claude Granda	Victoria Laubauch	Derek Liu
Patrician Nash	Charles Seybold	Douglas Waidelich
Carmella Zampino	Salvatore Zampino	



Sojourns to Saudi Arabia and North Korea Prove Enthralling, Disquieting for Dr. Cecilia Rokusek

By Scott Colton, Director of Medical Communications

Because the United States is a country that epitomizes democracy and freedom of choice, many Americans don't think twice when it comes to activities as commonplace as enjoying a drink with friends after work, taking a fun-filled vacation to a sun-drenched destination, or having a dazzling array of entertainment options available to them at a touch of a button in the comfort of their homes.

Unfortunately, there are still countries around the world where dictatorship and oppression, not democracy, rule the citizenry, and precepts such as freedom of choice—or thought—are nothing more than a dim glimmer of hope for the many downtrodden individuals who live under such stifling governmental rule. Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., R.D., had the opportunity to witness the suppressive nature of two regimes firsthand when she visited North Korea in May 2007 and Saudi Arabia last Thanksgiving as part of a Universal Travel System group that designs trips for people who are among the most traveled in the world.

Dr. Rokusek, who has journeyed to approximately 40 countries in her lifetime, had harbored a desire to visit North Korea ever since she spent six months working as a visiting professor at Yonsei University in South Korea in 1997. "Back in 1975 when I was in college, one of my favorite professors and advisors, Dr. Soojae Zeon, was Korean," explained Dr. Rokusek, who serves as executive director of education, planning, and research and project manager for NSU-COM's Center for Bioterrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness. "Two decades later, when I was the dean of health professions at Governors State University (GSU) in University Park, Illinois, we reconnected through a Korean professor at GSU. Dr. Zeon then invited me to come to South Korea as a visiting professor. I had a fabulous time and really got to know the people and culture of South Korea, which is very forward-thinking, modern, and technologically advanced. But North Korea is a totally different story."

Since the United States currently has no diplomatic relations with North Korea, U.S. flights are not permitted to fly directly to North

Korea, which is also called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As a result, Dr. Rokusek and her traveling troupe had to fly to Beijing, China, to catch one of the tri-weekly flights to North Korea. "There were 11 Americans in our group, and the North Korean government said it would provide visas for us once we arrived in China."

Each year, the North Korean government issues approximately 1,000 U.S. visas, but sometimes even those promised the necessary documentation take a huge risk by traveling to Beijing only to have their visas arbitrarily denied at the last minute. "A year earlier, the North Korean embassy in Beijing denied visas to a similar group of visitors; fortunately, we didn't have that problem," said Dr. Rokusek, who spent five days in the socialist republic. "An interesting fact is that nowhere on my passport does it show I visited North Korea because we were given a group visa instead of individual ones."

As soon as the group landed in Pyongyang, North Korea, everyone had their cell phones confiscated. This unexpected act gave Dr. Rokusek her first taste of what to expect in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "Before I went there, I had no idea what the conditions were going to be like," she admitted. "As I soon discovered, it is the most restrictive country in the world."

Unlike many other parts of the world, where tourists can move about freely, Dr. Rokusek and her travel mates were accompanied by two government tour guides and one government official at all times. In fact, the threesome even slept in the same austere hotel. "We were not allowed to go anywhere ourselves, which I quickly discovered when I took a walk outside the hotel with one of my friends around 6:00 a.m.," she recalled. "Once we reached a certain point, a soldier came after us, put his hand up for us to stop, and told us to go back."

As for the hotel accommodations, anyone expecting five-star treatment and lavish amenities was in for an unexpectedly minimalist experience. "There wasn't much to do in the hotel, which was situated on an island," Dr. Rokusek revealed. "There were no glitzy coffee shops, stores, or restaurants—and no nightlife whatsoever. There was only a small gift store that sold mostly books related to the leaders of the country. And when it came to meals, which were low in meat protein and not extravagant, it was like the old communist days in Europe because we ate at long tables in a communal fashion."

However, despite the spartan hotel conditions, Dr.



Dr. Rokusek in North Korea.



Saudi Arabian splendor.



Art monument in North Korea.



With good friend Bob Petrik.



Group shot in North Korea.

Rokusek was amazed by one surprising item that was found in each room—an emergency preparedness kit that came equipped with items such as a flashlight, candles, and bandages.

During her stay in North Korea, Dr. Rokusek says she was repeatedly struck by just how intentionally isolated the country is from the rest of the world and how suppressive daily life can be for the people who reside there. "The biggest surprise to me was just how restrictive things could be in this day and age," she explained. "There is no Internet allowed in the country, just intranet, which means there is no ability to interact with the outside world, and there are almost no cars in the city even though there are modern six-lane highways built for the military. In addition, the electricity is turned off every night to make sure people stay in their homes and don't go out after a certain time. We had electricity in the hotel, but in the city of almost two million people, everything is dark after 9:30 p.m."

In terms of "entertainment," the general public only has access to two TV stations—the official North Korea station, which is primarily an army channel, as well as one that plays classical music and very limited state programming. There is, however, one incredible event held annually that Dr. Rokusek had the privilege of attending called the Mass Games that are a form of performing arts or gymnastics in which as many as 100,000 performers take part in a highly regimented show emphasizing group dynamics rather than individual prowess. "It was the most phenomenal thing I had seen," said Dr. Rokusek of the two-hour performance called Arirang, which was performed six nights a week for two months and involved performances that celebrate the history of North Korea. "Overall, the people we met were very kind and gracious," she said. "Clearly, ideology and politics divide us, but in our hearts we could connect with the people."

Six months later, when the globetrotter added yet another stamp to her passport by traveling to Saudi Arabia for six days, she would reflect on the experience by calling it, "the most stressful country I've ever visited in terms of how women were treated and how different the society is. Saudi Arabia is a beautiful and fascinating country that is rich in culture, but to see the beauty of the cities and culture and then witness how poorly women are treated was the hardest aspect for me to accept. Women are not able to drive or vote. They can—and do—go to school, but generally women do not work except in professional fields like education, medicine, and nursing."

Dr. Rokusek marveled at the scope and majesty of the Mass Games held in North Korea.



As soon as Dr. Rokusek stepped off the plane in Saudi Arabia, she was handed a black abaya, which is an overgarment worn by many women in Muslim-majority countries that covers the entire body except for the face, feet, and hands. "The only restrictions placed on the female members of our group were to wear the abaya and wrap a scarf around

Rokusek stayed in a high-end Marriott hotel and was able to roam about the streets unimpeded with her traveling group or male companion, although armed guards were in clear view everywhere she went. However, while armed guards were in abundant supply, one universal item was surprisingly absent: alcohol. "We learned

"...a woman cannot leave the country without the permission of her husband, brother, or father because it is prescribed by law, yet men can come and go freely."

our heads and neck," she explained. "We could at least leave our faces uncovered, but the native women can have no skin showing because it is Islam law that they not show any part of their bodies in public. The men, however, are allowed to walk around in casual clothes like jeans and T-shirts. Interestingly, once a woman is in the privacy of her home, she can walk around in blue jeans or a skirt."

She also discovered that Saudi Arabian women are treated as second-class citizens in just about every conceivable way. "For example, a woman cannot leave the country without the permission of her husband, brother, or father because it is prescribed by law, yet men can come and go freely," she explained. "At the airport, there is a women's waiting lounge and a men's waiting lounge, which meant I could not sit with my male traveling companion. And in the Saudi home, women and men have their own separate entrances."

Because she is curious by nature, Dr. Rokusek decided to totally immerse herself in the culture and experience life through the eyes of a native Saudi Arabian woman, so to speak. "I wanted to see what the whole outfit felt like, so I bought a niqab, which is a face veil made of material you tie around the back of your head," she said. "I actually enjoyed wearing the abaya because it made getting dressed each morning very easy, but wearing the face veil wasn't fun because it was very hot and made me perspire."

Unlike the stark conditions she experienced in North Korea, Dr.

that alcohol is not allowed in the country, and that if you're caught drinking, you can be imprisoned for two years," she said.

As she toured the country, she also came to a stunning realization that she immediately shared with her NSU-COM colleagues when she returned from her enlightening odyssey. "When I came back from Saudi Arabia, the first thing I said to my staff was 'terrorism is alive and well,'" she stated. "Unfortunately, I don't think we can conquer it because the Islam religion is their way of life, and their beliefs guide their actions. Ultimately, I think we are going to have to respect and understand that. We can live, I believe, in greater world harmony if we can learn to understand and respect the unique cultures and religions of our world."



Getting to Know: Memorial Healthcare System

Memorial Healthcare System has a reputation as one of Florida's leading health care systems and is supported by a distinguished medical staff. The majority of physicians are board certified and/or board qualified in their specialties. With a committed and supportive executive and medical staff, Memorial's primary goals are to provide excellent patient care and improve the health of the community.

Memorial Regional Hospital, a 690-bed Level 1 Trauma Center that opened in 1953, has established a distinguished reputation for being medically and technologically advanced, with over 70 specialties and subspecialties practiced at the medical center, which is the flagship facility of the Memorial Healthcare System and one of the largest hospitals in Florida. With a focus on health care excellence, Memorial Regional, located in Hollywood, Florida, continues to expand and implement new, exciting programs and services for its patients and professional staff.

Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital (JDCH), a 133-bed facility, was established in 1992 and has earned considerable esteem for its cutting-edge technology, exemplary medical expertise, and compassionate care. JDCH, which is the only pediatric trauma center in southern Broward County, also has merited the distinction of being the leading children's hospital in Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Memorial Hospital West, a 299-bed acute care facility located in Pembroke Pines, Florida, opened in 1992. The hospital, which serves as the leader in births and pediatric emergency-room visits in Broward County, was identified as the Best Hospital to Give Birth, Best Emergency Room for Kids, and Best Hospital for Pediatrics in Broward County by *South Florida Parenting* in 2005.

Memorial Hospital Miramar opened in March 2005 and is a cutting-edge, 128-bed hospital featuring all private rooms with some of the latest technological advancements. The hospital offers a comprehensive array of medical and surgical services, including a separate Children's Emergency Department that is affiliated with Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. The Family Birthplace features fully equipped, private suites with comfortable amenities for patients and their families.

Memorial Hospital Pembroke, a 301-bed acute care facility, is located in the heart of Pembroke Pines. The personal, one-on-one attention of a community facility and the advanced medical and surgical services of a leading health care provider come together at Memorial Hospital Pembroke.

Memorial Regional Hospital South (MRHS), a 324-bed acute care hospital located in Hollywood, Florida,

is the latest addition to the Memorial family. Acquired in December 2006, MRHS focuses on care of the adult population by providing medical, surgical, and outpatient services to the surrounding community.

Fast Fact

Memorial Healthcare System and NSU-COM's affiliation began in July 1996. Each year, 20 to 22 third-year NSU-COM students conduct their clinical rotations through the Memorial Healthcare System, which offers medical students clinical rotations in internal medicine, pediatrics, surgery, trauma, emergency medicine, OB/GYN, and cardiology. Educational sessions also are offered to all medical students in the form of informative lectures, conferences, and annual pediatric and trauma symposiums. In addition, fourth-year students are welcome to make arrangements to rotate with an MHS physician.

Beyond its affiliation with the College of Osteopathic Medicine, MHS also enjoys a productive association with Nova Southeastern University's audiology, anesthesiologist assistant, physician assistant, pediatric dentistry, and oral/maxillofacial residency programs. Memorial Healthcare System is unique in its commitment to provide safe, quality, and cost-effective services to its patients, regardless of their ability to pay, with the goal of improving the health of the community. MHS constantly strives to improve services and satisfy the needs of its patients to become a world-class model of excellence.

Currently, the Studer Group and Memorial Healthcare System are working together to create and sustain operational excellence. A culture of service and operational excellence attracts and retains talented staff,



Memorial Regional Hospital



Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital



Memorial Regional Hospital South

MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Simply the Best!



Memorial Hospital West



Memorial Hospital Pembroke



Memorial Hospital Miramar

Clinical Campus Spotlight

financially outperforms the competition, has excellent clinical outcomes, is full of employee-generated ideas for improvement, and has excellent patient, employee, and physician satisfaction. Memorial Healthcare System starts with a solid foundation where top management supports this culture by modeling the behaviors.

Notably, Memorial Healthcare System is one of the first in Florida to implement an innovative safety program called Crew Resource Management that is based on proven techniques used by the commercial and military aviation industries. The training program teaches team building, recognizing adverse situations, checking and crosschecking, communications, decision making, performance feedback, and how to avoid patient safety breakdowns.

Over the years, MHS facilities have earned many prestigious awards such as

- Top 100 Hospitals
- Consumer Choice Award
- Best Run Hospital
- Best Nursing Staff
- Best Pediatric Hospital
- Best Maternity Hospital
- Best Fitness Center

Memorial Healthcare also received the American Hospital Association's Living the Vision and Foster G. McGaw awards in which Memorial was selected from over 5,000 hospitals to serve as the first-ever national model for improving the health of the community it serves.

Recent accomplishments include Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital being the recipient of Studer Group's January Fire Starter of the Month Award for its commitment to clinical service and operational excellence. In addition, Memorial Regional Hospital's Bariatric Program earned a "Center of Excellence" designation from the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery. The Top Performer in Acute Patient Care for two consecutive years has been awarded to Memorial Hospital Pembroke by Premier, Inc. and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

"With patient care and community health being primary concerns, Memorial Healthcare System strongly believes our continued success involves our future doctors," said Stanley Marks, M.D., director of medical affairs at Memorial Regional Hospital. "We recognize the importance and value of our partnership with Nova Southeastern University. Memorial is confident that its excellent reputation in all aspects of health care is evident by our facility being a first choice among medical students. Our physicians are eager to mentor medical students in an effort to further their medical training, thereby improving the level of quality health care in our community as well as communities across the country."



**Memorial
Healthcare
System aids in
providing top-
notch clinical
training
opportunities
for NSU-COM
students.**

NSU-COM Alumni Association Executive Committee

Past Presidents

Pre 1995 - Holly Pomeranz, D.O. ('86)
 1996 - Daniel McBath, D.O. ('90)
 1997 - Orlando Garcia, D.O. ('94)
 1998 - Michael Gervasi, D.O. ('87)
 1999 - Tamer Gozleveli, D.O. ('94)
 2000 - John Geake, D.O. ('93)
 2001 - Isidro Pujol, D.O. ('94)
 2002 - Jeffrey Grove, D.O. ('90)
 2003 - Glenn Moran, D.O. ('88)
 2004 - Kenneth Johnson, D.O. ('91)
 2005 - Steven Cimerberg ('87)
 2006 - Ronald Renuart, D.O. ('90)
 2007 - Gregory James, D.O. ('88)

Trustees at Large

Annette Da Silva, D.O. ('96)
 Tamer Gozleveli, D.O. ('87)
 Mayrene Hernandez, D.O. ('01)
 Stephen MacDonald, D.O. ('90)
 Glenn Moran, D.O. ('88)
 William Stager, D.O. ('89)

2008-2009 Officers

Robert Blackburn, D.O. ('86)
 President

Ronald Tolchin, D.O. ('89)
 President Elect

Daniel Carney, D.O. ('95)
 Vice President

Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O. ('94)
 Secretary

Andrew Gross, D.O. ('93)
 Treasurer

Gregory James, D.O. ('88)
 Immediate Past President

Howard L. Neer, D.O.
 Associate Dean, Alumni Affairs

Lynne Cawley, M.Sc.
 Director, Alumni Affairs

Living Tribute Honorees

2002 - Mary Smith Allegro
 2003 - Arthur Snyder, D.O.
 2004 - Lori Dribin, Ph.D.
 2005 - Edye Groseclose, Ph.D.
 2006 - Howard Hada, Ph.D.
 2008 - Cyril Blavo, D.O.

Distinguished Service

2007 - Mary Smith Allegro

Celebration of Excellence

Distinguished Alumni

1999 - Archie McLean, D.O. ('88)
 2000 - James Turner, D.O. ('88)
 2001 - Daniel McBath, D.O. ('90)
 2003 - Joel Rush, D.O. ('85)
 2004 - Jeffrey Grove, D.O. ('90)
 2005 - Gregory James, D.O. ('88)
 2006 - Glenn Moran, D.O. ('88)
 2007 - Ross Zafonte, D.O. ('85)
 2008 - Majdi Ashchi, D.O. ('89)

Alumni in the News

Majdi Ashchi, D.O., FACC, FSCAI, FCCP, FABVM ('89) was honored with the NSU College of Osteopathic Medicine Distinguished Alumni Award in January at the 10th Annual NSU Celebration of Excellence ceremony held at the Signature Grand in Davie, Florida. Each year, this prestigious event brings together community leaders and industry pioneers who have made significant contributions to their professions, communities, and alma maters.

Joanna L. Greenblatt-Drowos, D.O. ('04), who is a family medicine resident at Broward General Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was named as a recipient of the 2008 American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation Leadership Award, which was presented to Dr. Drowos during the organization's National Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C., in March.

Charles E. Garramone, D.O. ('98) was recently listed in *The Guide to America's Top Plastic Surgeons 2007 Edition*. This is the second consecutive year that Dr. Garramone, who has a practice called Aesthetic Plastic Surgery Institute, PA, in Sunrise, Florida, has received this recognition.

Robert Gotlin, D.O. ('87), who serves as director of orthopaedic and sports rehabilitation in the Continuum Center for Health and Healing at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York, was recently appointed as chief medical officer for the JCC Maccabi Games that will be held at various sites throughout the United States in August 2008. Dr. Gotlin also has two research projects awaiting publication: "Manual Treatment for Coccydynia" and "A New Clinical Test for Lateral Epicondylitis."

Scott Greenberg, D.O. ('03), who is currently an orthopedic resident at Broward General Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, captured first place in the Clinical Assembly of Osteopathic Specialists Scientific Poster Awards Competition held last October in San Francisco, California. Dr. Greenberg's poster focused on the title "Percutaneous Reduction of Depression Fractures of the Tibial Plateau: A New Technique."

Tamer Gozleveli, D.O. ('87), who serves as vice chief of family practice at Memorial Hospital West in Pembroke Pines, Florida, has been nominated to serve as chief of the facility's Department of Family Practice.

Randy Katz, D.O. ('99), who completed his emergency medicine residency at St. Barnabas Hospital in Bronx, New York, was recently appointed as chief of emergency medicine and medical director of emergency services at Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood, Florida.

Nicholas Mansuetta, D.O. ('92) has been named assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery at UAB Highlands, which is a general acute care facility located in the Medical Center District of Birmingham, Alabama.

Ronald Renuart, D.O. ('90) is running as a republican candidate for the Florida House of Representatives in District 18, which is in the Jacksonville area.



**Dynamic Duo:
Lynne Cawley and
Dr. Howard Neer**

Office of Alumni Affairs Cultivates Close-Knit Relationships with Graduates

By Scott Colton, Director of Medical Communications

Alumni Office Cultivates Close Ties with Graduates

It certainly wouldn't be an understatement to say that NSU-COM's Office of Alumni Affairs has come a long way since its inception in 1994, which is a fact evidenced by skyrocketing donations to the Alumni Association Fund, record attendance at various alumni events, and enhanced alumni interaction with the college and its students.

However, before the office was established, alumni communication was practically nonexistent. "Except for those who lived locally, we had minimal contact with our alumni," admitted Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFP, professor and associate dean of alumni affairs, who has been intricately involved with alumni relations since its inception at the college. "We had no alumni functions at the time, nor did we have a newsletter to promote alumni news."

Over the next five years, numerous steps were taken to rectify those deficiencies by coordinating alumni receptions at FOMA and AOA conferences, creating an annual alumni reunion, and launching *COM Outlook* magazine to keep graduates apprised of news and accomplishments concerning the College of Osteopathic Medicine. As a result of these and many other enhancements, the Office of Alumni Affairs has evolved into

fact, all NSU-COM alumni automatically become members of the association once they graduate. "We're trying to do more and more things for the alumni so we can give back to them and thank them for their support," said Cawley, who coordinated a hugely successful reception aboard the USS Midway aircraft carrier during last October's American Osteopathic Association 112th Annual Convention and Scientific Seminar in San Diego, California.

"I'm not sure we could ever top what we did in San Diego last October, but we can certainly coordinate programming that will be similar," Cawley stated. "We also try to offer our alumni as much as we possibly can in terms of services. For example, we post nationwide job opportunities on our Web site and assist alumni with all their licensing and credentialing needs. If alumni are applying for hospital privileges somewhere, we can provide a copy of their dean's letters for free and send out verification to the licensure office or the hospital they're applying to."

The alumni, who clearly appreciate the efforts of Cawley and Dr. Neer, have responded by giving back to the college both monetarily and professionally to assure NSU-COM's continued reputation as an institution that embodies traits such as innovation

"The communication Dr. Neer and I both have with the alumni and the close relationships we've formed with them over the years are invaluable." (Lynne Cawley, director of alumni affairs)

a multifaceted entity that has created a positive and ongoing synergy between the college and its distinguished alumni base, which now exceeds 2,800.

According to Lynne Cawley, M.Sc., who serves as director of alumni affairs, the key to the department's success can be summed up in one word: interaction. "The communication Dr. Neer and I both have with the alumni and the close relationships we've formed with them over the years are invaluable," she said. "We travel all over the country to attend various conventions and meetings, so we are able to recognize alumni and remember what year they graduated. I think that has helped us considerably, as has our *COM Outlook* magazine, which has done a lot to really bring our graduates together and create a sense of community. They see what other alumni are doing, notice that their peers are donating money, and are motivated to give back to the college as well."

The Office of Alumni Affairs also serves as a multipurpose hub that provides a variety of services and affords graduates a genuine voice in shaping the college's future. "The Alumni Association Executive Committee plays a key role in setting the agenda for our office," Dr. Neer explained. "The officers, who are elected by the alumni, serve as a sounding board for information pertaining to the college. They also assist in training our students during their rotations, act as mentors, and help raise funds to support the college."

Attendance at all alumni events is free, and there are no fees involved with being a member of the Alumni Association. In

and excellence. "Over the past few years we have seen a major increase in both the number and amount of monetary donations they are giving to the school," Cawley said. "My goal in 2007 was not so much about bringing in more money than the year before; it was about getting more people to participate in the annual campaign than we've ever had before. To accomplish this, we initiated a young alumni giving program and started the Leave a Legacy Program, which allows alumni to buy a bench and have their name and class year engraved on it.

"We're also initiating programs that will bring alumni into the flow of the college, such as having graduates return to the campus to act as mentors to the students and interact with our academical societies," she added. "Students value alumni interaction and want graduates to come in and share their experiences about



Last year's alumni reception held aboard the USS Midway aircraft carrier in San Diego during the AOA Convention proved to be an ambitious—and immensely popular—alumni endeavor.

Alumni Office Cultivates Close Ties with Graduates



setting up a practice or how they raise a family while being a busy physician—and how they tie that all together. By giving back in this way, the alumni become an integral part of the college they graduated from.”

In addition to the aforementioned alumni interactions, NSU-COM graduates also provide a vital service to the college by keeping its applicant pool stocked with merit-worthy candidates. “We’re lucky because our alumni are based all over the country and allow potential students to shadow them in their offices,” Cawley explained. “They will frequently call us to make a recommendation about a potential student who is applying to the school, and 95 percent of the time, those they recommend turn out to be good students while they’re here and supportive alumni once they graduate. The willingness of our alumni to help funnel high-quality applicants to NSU-COM has been huge for us. In fact, we could never do what we do without all the wonderful alumni who take charge of and responsibility for the Alumni Association.”

As for future goals, Cawley says the immediate plan is to stay the course and focus on enhancing current initiatives. “One thing I’d like to see us do is showcase our alumni more prominently,” she stated. “We have such wonderful alumni who are out there in their communities doing great things, and they need to let us know so we can publish their accomplishments in *COM Outlook*. Our goal is to keep building on what we already do. I’m not really sure where that will take us, but if we can continue to outreach to the alumni in various ways, great things will happen. At our alumni receptions last October in San Diego, the students were in awe of the alumni they spoke to, how friendly they were, and what they are doing in their careers. The alumni we have are exceptional, and their willingness to serve as examples to our students is just invaluable.”

For additional information about NSU-COM alumni activities, please visit the college’s Web site at <http://medicine.nova.edu>.

NSU Alumni Benefits and Services

In addition to the services provided through NSU-COM’s Office of Alumni Affairs, the university’s alumni office offers graduates an array of benefits that run the gamut from rental car discounts to free access to select research databases available through the NSU Alvin Sherman Library. Following are some of the benefits and services provided through NSU’s Alumni Association:

- Automotive Benefits
- Career Services Options
- Car Rental Discounts
- Discounted Florida Marlins Tickets
- Discounted Florida Panthers Tickets
- Discounted *Sun-Sentinel* Subscriptions
- Insurance Options
- Interactive Web Access
- Library Access
- Delivery of Journal Articles from HPD Library
- Borrowing Privileges from HPD Library
- NSU Athletic Event Discounts
- NSU Email Accounts
- NSU License Plate Replacement Program
- Recreation Discounts
- Residential Mortgage Lending Program
- Travel Benefits

To learn more about these benefits and services, please visit www.nova.edu/alumni/benefits.html.



Living Tribute Award Winner: Dr. Cyril Blavo



Dr. Blavo (left) receives his Living Tribute Award from Dr. Gregory James, Alumni Association president.

During his 20 years as a professor of pediatrics at NSU-COM, Dr. Cyril Blavo—a seven-time recipient of the Golden Apple Award—has been recognized as a dedicated and compassionate individual who truly cares about the plight of his students, colleagues—and the world-at-large. On February 9, 2008, the affection he shares so freely with the world was warmly reciprocated when Dr. Blavo was presented with the Living Tribute Award during the college's 12th Annual Alumni Reunion and Continuing Medical Education Program.

Although he has served the college with distinction in a variety of key positions, including his current role as director of the Master of Public Health Program, it is his altruistic nature—which he modestly downplays—that truly merits him recognition as a Living Tribute Award honoree. Because his desire to help others is so strong, he co-founded a not-for-profit organization called International Health Initiatives (IHI) a few years ago that is dedicated to charitable service, including bringing health care to remote and underserved areas of Africa.

By rallying community support, he served as a true guiding force in the construction of a health facility in Tafi Atome—an impoverished village in the Volta region of Ghana. Dr. Blavo and his colleagues, which include public health students, several NSU-COM faculty

members, and a number of South Florida community leaders, also are launching a major public health initiative called the Community Health Prevention Service (CHPS) Zone at Tafi Atome. Through the CHPS Zone, a formal health care infrastructure will be established, in collaboration with the local Ministry of Health, to provide medical outreach in a region that has only experienced local traditional herbalist health care.

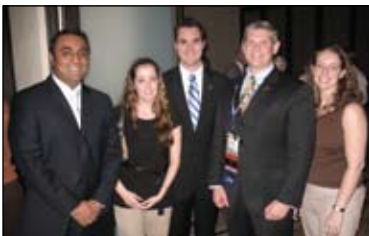
In addition, plans have been underway—through community and external support—to establish a not-for-profit international public health facility in Kokrobite, Ghana, that can serve as a center of collaboration for philanthropic organizations. Thankfully, such organizations have become increasingly aware of Dr. Blavo's humanitarian efforts and have expressed interest in collaborating with his group. On the professional front, Dr. Blavo, who is an AOA Mentor Hall of Fame inductee, serves on a number of community-based committees such as the Broward County Regional Health Planning Council Board of Directors. He also volunteers his time to the Governance Board of the One Community Partnership, which deals with severely emotionally disturbed children in Broward County.

In his “spare time,” Dr. Blavo enjoys serving as a volunteer producer of African performing and cultural arts presentations, which he calls “Edutainment.” In this role, he entertains people while educating them about African culture. He also serves as conductor of an African gospel choir called the Joyful Singers that performs at various churches and for charitable organizations such as Ronald McDonald House.

Dr. Blavo, who is a true life champion, also excels as an athlete on the soccer field. In fact, he even passed up an opportunity to participate in professional soccer to pursue his education in osteopathic medicine. Dr. Blavo's love of the sport has even rubbed off on his daughter, Yolanda, who he jokingly says he is training so she can compete on the U.S. women's soccer team at the 2020 Olympic Games.

FOMA Alumni Reception Draws a Crowd

The Alumni Association held an informal reception during the 105th Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) Annual Convention held February 22 at the Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Approximately 85 individuals attended the reception, including representatives from FOMA as well as current and past American Osteopathic Association presidential leadership.



12th Annual Alumni Reunion Marks Milestones



A mix of merriment and medical education characterized the 12th Annual Alumni Reunion and Continuing Medical Education Program, which was held February 8-10 at the Renaissance Hotel in Plantation, Florida.

The alumni weekend kicked off in style with a Friday night reception that allowed family, faculty, and friends to reestablish and/or

strengthen old bonds. "The reception is always a great way to get the weekend started," said Lynne Cawley, M.Sc., director of alumni affairs. "For many, it's the first time they've seen each other since graduation."

Saturday and Sunday mornings were spent in the Morris Auditorium at the NSU campus in Davie earning CME credits for attending lectures presented by COM alumni. "We always try and get our alumni to deliver the lectures," said Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFP, associate dean of alumni affairs. "We have a plethora of successful physicians, and they continue to share their knowledge and expertise with others." In addition, for the first time in its 12-year history, physicians other than NSU-COM alumni were welcome to attend the lectures and earn CME credits, which is a trend Dr. Neer hopes to see continue.

The weekend's highlight was the Saturday evening banquet, which attracted approximately 175 attendees and honored the classes of 1988 and 1998. "The leaders from the class of 1988 were very diligent in contacting their fellow classmates to come to the reunion," Cawley stated. "In fact, we seem to get a better response when classmates contact each other directly."

In addition to honoring COM graduates, Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.P.H. and T.M., FACOP, director of the college's Master of Public Health Program, was honored as the 2008 recipient of the Living Tribute Award that recognizes an outstanding faculty/staff member for contributions to the college and the osteopathic profession. It proved to be a truly memorable evening for Dr. Blavo as many of his family, friends, and supporters joined in honoring a great professor and humanitarian whose health initiatives in Ghana have received national recognition. "Dr. Blavo touched the lives of many students, and it has been great seeing the response of alumni giving back to the COM in his honor," Cawley remarked.

The excitement level regarding the alumni reunion was epitomized by members of the inaugural class of 1985, who have already started making plans for their 25-year reunion in two years. "They're working on reaching 100 percent participation in 2010," said Cawley, who admittedly relishes her role as the college's director of alumni affairs. "You can't help but love the excitement being generated—and all the credit goes to the continued alumni involvement."

For your information, the 13th Annual Alumni Reunion CME Weekend will be held February 6-8, 2009.



Alumni Reunion Photo Gallery



Dr. Tyler Cymet Reflects on the 20th Anniversary of his SECOM Graduation

Tyler Cymet, D.O., a class of 1988 alumnus, shares his thoughts about commemorating his 20th anniversary as a Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (SECOM) graduate. Dr. Cymet currently serves as section head of family medicine at Sinai Hospital of Baltimore and assistant professor of internal medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Twenty years since graduating and leaving SECOM to start life as a professional seems like it should be significant. But I can't figure out what that significance is besides being a big number. It doesn't have the relief and exhilaration of getting accepted into D.O. school. There isn't the excitement we had when we graduated, and there isn't the uncertainty we faced when we finished training and started into practice. It isn't an exciting milestone, but it seems like it should be a milestone nonetheless.

So what if 20 years have gone by since we started to do what we are doing? We should have 20 more years of doing it.

But I wanted to go to the reunion for lots of reasons, and all of them had individual names. Michael Baron and Glenn Moran called to talk it up and share details about where they are in life. I heard that people would be there I hadn't seen in way too long a period of time and hadn't kept up with even though I know my life and career would be better had I made a greater attempt to keep the connections.

There was the prurient interest in the appearance of classmates. And 20 years is long enough removed from the pains that we had endured so as to have been forgotten, and we can start to romanticize what at the time we called issues, but now are just stories.

At 20 years out there isn't much competition anymore with ex-classmates. We have chosen our paths and are far enough along that it defines us in an individual way. People don't need to impress their former classmates; they want to compare lives a bit more intellectually.

Because 20 years into this thing we call a "career" we realize how few compatriots there are who understand what experiences we have had. And an age mate who has lived through the same things we lived through and during the same times in history is incredibly valuable in giving us perspective and appreciation of our experiences.

Going through the times we did and the corrections we endured from living through the invention of managed care, the birth of the Internet, being on call, and focusing on the distance of where we were to the closest payphone we may

need to use. Now a payphone couldn't be found anywhere between offices, home, and hospital. And the adage that 50 percent of what you learn in medical school will be proven wrong before our career is over can now clearly be determined to have been understated.

We now no longer talk about malpractice when a patient with heart failure is given beta blockers; it is malpractice NOT to give them. Atrial fibrillation is no longer due to a "circus phenomenon" in the right atrium we struggled to understand for over a week in physiology class; we now are sure that A. Fib is an abnormality of the pulmonary veins starting the electrical activity inappropriately.

The numbers we memorized concerning cholesterol were off by over 20 percent. We lived through the drug recalls of lotronex, baycol, duract, viox, bextra, numerous quinolones, and others. While we were in school, we were told that inhaled insulin would be available soon and replace shots, and we had the opportunity to use it and see a good idea fail miserably, something that seemed like it should work but really didn't.

Digoxin and theophylline were supposed to be important parts of care, but now we think that maybe they shouldn't be used. There were hemophiliacs to take care of when we trained—a disease I haven't seen in the last 15 years. And when we did a person with hemophilia, it was quickly followed by an admission that they also had iatrogenic-induced HIV or hepatitis. Medicine failed them, and the vast majority of those patients have died from AIDS or hepatitis that we as a profession inflicted upon them.

Heartburn stopped being a problem of what foods the person was eating and became an infectious disease. Migraines have gone from a "personality issue" to a treatable medical problem, and we no longer need 50 different medicines to use because two are effective enough.

Fibromyalgia and Lyme disease developed interest groups of patients who forced us to listen to them, and both have become diseases since we graduated.

More bacteria have changed names than actresses have had plastic surgery. And anthrax emerged as an issue in exactly



the opposite way from what we were taught. There was no "talk and die" phenomenon that was so dramatic and memorable when we were taught it, just a more indolent course like other infectious diseases.

Genetics came out of the classroom and into our offices, but no one will pay for it, and we aren't quite sure what to do with the information we are getting now. Our patients want us to have it, but only to share it with them when the news is good, or we should save it for when we need to do something about it. Yes, we now have fancy and expensive tests to replace the family history.

We memorized the few vaccines to give to kids through childhood with a clear, unquestioned feeling that each and every vaccine is doing well for our patients, and we have seen the numbers of vaccines we can use to do good for our patients expand exponentially. Each new vaccine cheered on by us physicians as a singular success although developing even more confusing algorithms of what vaccines to give to whom and when. While questions of how many vaccines a person can take and what effect they will have on mast cells and activating liquid malignancies are just starting to come up.

And we are living through the friendly takeover of medicine by the pharmaceutical companies that are using science and randomized double-blinded studies to manipulate what we do. So we no longer tell patients with chicken pox they don't need to be treated with medicine and will get better on their own. Instead, we tell them to take medicine five times a day for 10 days so they will heal hour sooner and have 10 percent fewer pox. The study was significant, so every

FP around has to give the medicine or risk being shown up by a doc down the street as not doing everything he can to help his patient.

So at 20 years out we feel like we have gained the right to question more and step off the algorithms that we had memorized of what needs to be done today to be a good doctor. We feel comfortable with our experience and want to use it. Even if we have lost some of the basic biochemical pathways that let us question what we were doing in the first place, and the physiologic rationale for some of our conclusions have been misplaced or filed away in a cul-de-sac of our brains that we cannot remember how to access like our old notes.

The mechanisms of action are becoming secondary to our practice patterns and comfort with colleagues. And comparing experiences with our old classmates can be more instructive than pub med or the old hardcopy index medicus texts that Naomi used to line our library.

At 20 years down the road we can look back at our school and focus on what it was about it that was so special. It wasn't the Little House where we spent eight semesters; it was the people in the little house. We didn't so much stand on the shoulders of those who came before us as we steadied ourselves on the arms of our classmates who went through this part of life with us. And in many ways took bits of them with us as we went on with life.

It is great to see our school growing and succeeding. It is even better to watch it happen with friends who have experienced the changes.



Dr. Cymet is a member of the Dean's Alumni Advisory Council, which is a volunteer body composed of NSU-COM administrators as well as alumni leaders throughout the country who meet quarterly to discuss the college's programs while also assessing future plans.

Heart of the Matter: Dr. Majdi Ashchi Follows Through on Childhood Pledge

*By Scott Colton
Director of Medical Communications*



When 1989 alumnus Majdi Ashchi, D.O., FACC, FSCAI, FCCP, FABVM, was just five years old, he made a bold proclamation about the career path he intended to pursue once he reached adulthood.

“My cousin, who was the same age as me and was my constant playmate, had to have open-heart surgery,” recalled Dr. Ashchi, who serves as the founding physician of First Coast Cardiovascular Institute in Jacksonville, Florida. “Because my cousin’s condition was so serious, a surgeon was brought in from South Africa to operate on his heart. I still visibly remember sitting in the waiting room with my family for hours. Everybody was pacing back and forth, but when the surgeon came out and said everything went well, we were all elated. Suddenly, the doctor asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, so I said I wanted to be a heart doctor. I guess I kept my promise.”

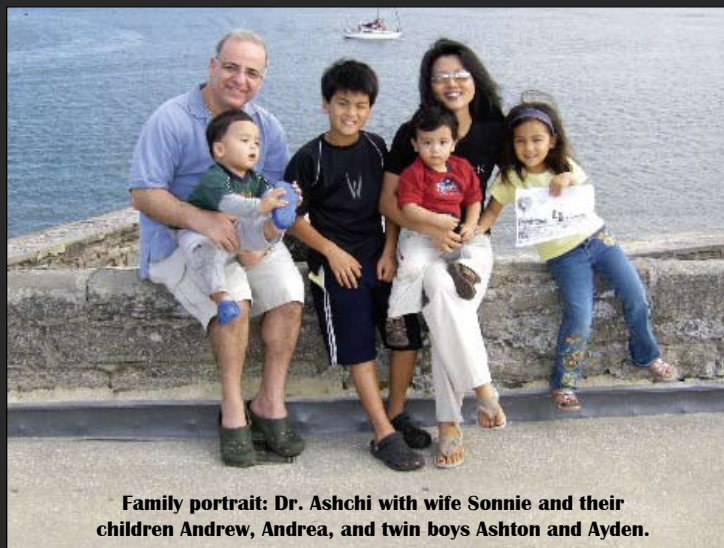
Dr. Ashchi, who was born in Israel and lived there until he was 14, faced a difficult transition when his family decided to relocate to Winter Haven in Central Florida. Because money was tight

at the time and he wasn’t yet fluent in English, the young teen helped out by picking oranges, working at a car wash, and selling burgers at Wendy’s—all while he was still in the 10th grade.

After graduating from Auburndale High School, Dr. Ashchi attended Polk Community College in Winter Haven before moving on to the University of South Florida in Tampa, where he earned his B.S. degree in biology. As graduation loomed, Dr. Ashchi was ready to officially launch his medical career as a student at Tufts University School of Medicine in Massachusetts, where he had already been accepted.

Then fate intervened in the form of a fairly new medical school in North Miami Beach called Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (SECOM). “I was all set to go to Tufts University, but then I decided to attend a lunchtime lecture at the University of South Florida that was being presented by Dr. Joe Namey and Marla Frohlinger from SECOM. They talked about osteopathic medicine, which I had never heard of before, but I was very impressed with what they had to say.”

After the presentation, the intrigued future D.O. chatted with Dr. Namey, who served as SECOM’s associate dean for clinical affairs at the time. “He invited me to visit the campus, so I took him up on his offer and drove down a few weeks later,” Dr. Ashchi stated. “I was so impressed that I sent in my application as soon as I drove back home. Fortunately, I was invited back for an interview and was accepted into the program a few weeks later.”



Family portrait: Dr. Ashchi with wife Sonnie and their children Andrew, Andrea, and twin boys Ashton and Ayden.

According to Dr. Ashchi, attending SECOM (now known, of course, as NSU-COM) was one of the smartest decisions he has ever made. “It was one of the best times of my life,” said Dr. Ashchi, who credits Dr. Namey and SECOM for helping make him the success he is today. “Graduation was something I’ll always remember fondly, but I remember the first day of school even more vividly because when I met Dr. Namey again, he gave me a hug and treated me like a son. He took me under his wing and really guided me. He was like my father because he listened to me in the hard times as well as the good.”

His experiences at SECOM and with osteopathic medicine left such an indelible mark that he has become a cheerleader for the profession—and his alma mater. “I have spoken to my cousins often enough about my experiences that two of them decided to go to osteopathic schools. In fact, one of my cousins, Ahsan Achtchi, is currently a fourth-year student at NSU-COM.”

After graduating from SECOM in 1989, Dr. Ashchi completed a rotating internship at Humana Hospital of South Broward in Hollywood, Florida, followed by an internal medicine residency at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio. He then pursued a cardiology fellowship at Case Western University-MetroHealth/Mount Sinai Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as an interventional cardiology fellowship from the University of Connecticut at Hartford Hospital in Connecticut. To supplement his income throughout his postgraduate training, Dr. Ashchi also spent several years working as an emergency room physician and as a physician for Life Flight®, which is a regional helicopter service designed to provide critically ill or injured patients swift access to advanced life support care and rapid transportation to critical care facilities.

It was during this time that Dr. Ashchi had the good fortune of meeting his wife, Sonnie, who just happened to be attending a lecture he was presenting at the Cleveland Clinic while in the midst of pursuing his cardiology fellowship. “I walked in to give a lecture to a bunch of residents and medical students, and there she was,” said Dr. Ashchi of their fortuitous encounter. “After the lecture, one of my interns told me I was going to marry this woman, and I just laughed at him. I said, ‘How do you know I’m going to marry her?’ He smiled and replied, ‘I can tell by the way you looked at her during the entire lecture.’ “But lo and behold, he was correct because I’ve been married to this incredible woman for 12 years.”

Dr. Ashchi and his wife, who is an OB-GYN, are now the proud parents of four children—10-year-old Andrew, 6-year-old Andrea, and twin boys Ashton and Ayden, who will be turning 2 in the next few months.

After completing his interventional cardiology fellowship in 1997, Dr. Ashchi spent five years working in a private group practice in the Jacksonville area. However, his desire to branch out on his own led him to establish a one-man practice called First Coast Cardiovascular Institute in 2002 that has expanded into an immensely successful 12-man group over the past six years.

“To be honest, the more I do and the more I achieve, the more it humbles me,” said Dr. Ashchi, who recently received the NSU-COM Distinguished Alumni Award and was named Physician of the Year by the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association in 2007. “Knowing is not enough; you must apply it. Willing is not enough; you must do it. That’s my motto.”

Dr. Ashchi says the roots of his institute’s success can be traced back to his SECOM education, which ingrained in him a love for what he does as well as the all-important holistic hallmarks he continues to use with his patients—and impart to his fellow physicians at First Coast. “Providing the best care possible for a patient is what really drives me,” he admitted. “The success of our practice is based on several things, including accountability, availability, affability, and ability. When I approach a cardiac patient, I don’t just deal with arteries that are blocked or a heart muscle that’s weak. I deal with the whole person in a positive, compassionate manner. I also am a firm believer in the words of Hippocrates, who said, ‘Wherever the art of medicine is loved, there is also a love of humanity.’ Thanks to my SECOM education, I know I’m the best physician I can possibly be.”



Alumni Association Fund Honor Roll

In the spring of 1999, NSU-COM launched an alumni-based fundraising effort to generate dollars that would be used to create an endowment fund to reduce future tuition costs for NSU-COM students and produce a funding pool that would be utilized for discretionary purposes as determined by the Alumni Association Executive Committee. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the following list of donors; however, if you notice an error or omission, please contact Lynne Cawley in the Office of Alumni Affairs at (954) 262-1029 to rectify the matter. For example, the college has received a number of donation cards with credit-card pledges where no name is listed. The Office of Alumni Affairs cannot process the credit-card donation without a name indicated, so if you have not received a letter of thanks from NSU-COM but know you have made a credit-card contribution, please contact Ms. Cawley at the aforementioned phone number.

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 Dr. Brian C. Moraes ('92)
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 Dr. Iran Niroomand-Rad ('89)
 Dr. Robert Nisenbaum ('90)
 Dr. Nelson Olaguibel ('87)
 Dr. Aeyal Oren ('99)
 Mr. Alexander Packman
 Dr. Greta Amy Peck ('86)
 Dr. Brent Penhall ('07)
 Dr. Jorge Perez ('90)
 Dr. Antonio Ramirez ('90)
 Dr. Ravinder Randhawa ('92)
 Dr. Michael Rasansky ('06)
 Dr. Marcos Rejtman ('94)
 Dr. Jeffrey Rich ('92)
 Dr. Saul Rigau ('89)
 Dr. Mark Ritch ('88)
 Dr. Michael Rohan ('01)
 Dr. Gary N. Rosenberg ('90)
 Dr. E. Larry Roycraft ('93)
 Dr. Allan Rubin
 Dr. Robert Ruffolo ('88)
 Dr. David Saltzman
 Dr. Stuart A. Sandler ('86)
 Dr. David D. Sarkarati ('00)

Dr. Melvin Sarnow
 Dr. Theodore Schock ('87)
 Dr. Andrew Schwartz ('03)
 Dr. Sandra Schwemmer
 Dr. Robert Sculthorpe
 Dr. Stuart Shalit ('90)
 Dr. Josephine Shallo-Hoffman
 Dr. John Yozen Shih ('91)
 Dr. John Shover
 Dr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Silvagni
 Mr. Stanley Silverman
 Dr. Rita Sivils ('92)
 Dr. Scott W. Smith ('94)
 Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Snyder
 Dr. Marian St. Petery ('00)
 Dr. John H. Stanton ('90)
 Dr. Margaret Starr
 Dr. Mark Stich ('87)
 Dr. Colene Stout
 Dr. James Sullivan ('87)
 Dr. Joseph W. Sullivan ('88)
 Dr. Richard J. Susi
 Dr. James H. Taylor
 Dr. Donald Teplitz ('85)
 Dr. Richard Thacker ('92)
 Dr. David Thomas
 Dr. Stephen A. Tramill ('88)
 Dr. Dafna Trites ('94)
 Dr. Claudine Ward ('02)
 Dr. Douglas P. Webster
 Dr. Richard Weisberg ('93)
 Dr. Michael Weiss ('86)
 Dr. Sharon White-Findley ('86)
 Dr. Margaret Wilkinson
 Dr. John E. Williams ('96)
 Dr. Michael Williams ('00)
 Dr. Paul Winner
 Dr. Scott Yagger ('89)
 Dr. Stephen Yandel ('89)
 Dr. Adrian M. Zachary ('98)
 Dr. Christopher Zub ('99)

It's Time...

to Submit Information to COM Outlook!

Since its inception in 2000, **COM Outlook** has served as a comprehensive information source for its students, alumni, faculty, and staff as well as the osteopathic profession. Consequently, it is our ongoing goal to have the magazine serve as a truly interactive enterprise that provides readers with an educational and insightful overview of NSU-COM activities, the osteopathic profession, and the myriad individuals who play a significant role in enhancing the college's stature locally, nationally, and globally.

We are currently in the process of compiling information for the summer 2008 issue of **COM Outlook** and invite our students, faculty, alumni, and staff to submit any news, articles, or photos that pertain to topics such as curricular changes, student organization news, the development of new programs, and esteem-enhancing research. We also encourage you to provide valuable input concerning future articles of interest you would like to see featured in the magazine.

In addition, alumni and faculty are encouraged to keep us apprised if they have

- been promoted or accepted a new professional position
- have had a major article or book published
- been appointed to a prestigious local, state, or national committee
- conducted noteworthy research
- received any special awards or recognition

Please submit all data via email to scottc@nova.edu by **Friday, June 6, 2008**. If you have any additional questions, please contact Scott Colton, director of medical communications, at (954) 262-5147.

Photo requirements - Photos can be submitted in either hardcopy or digital formats (JPG, TIFF, PNG); however, if you are submitting a digital image, it must be in a high-resolution format (300 dpi when scanned) or one of the higher camera settings on a digital device).

2008 Calendar of Events

April 18-20, 2008

53rd Annual Florida Academy of Osteopathy Conference
NSU-COM Campus
Davie, Florida

May 19, 2008

NSU-COM Fourth Annual Golf Tournament
Davie, Florida

May 22, 2008

Alumni Association Graduation Outing
Mai-Kai in Fort Lauderdale

May 23, 2008

NSU-COM Senior Dinner Dance
Hollywood, Florida

July 30 - August 3

FSACOFP Annual Convention
Orlando, Florida



Health Professions Division
College of Osteopathic Medicine
3200 South University Drive
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33328-2018

